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ABSTRACT

The booklet analyzes demographic and economic characteristics of married couples in the United States. The study is based on census data and on information about joint characteristics of husbands and wives. The objective of the study is to revise concepts related to family and household data by adding analysis of wives' characteristics to traditionally exclusive analysis of husband's age, sex, employment status, and occupation. Information is presented on age of husbands and wives, remarriage and intermarriage, educational attainment of husbands and wives, social characteristics of younger and older couples, employment characteristics of married couples, income of married couples, and occupations of husbands and wives. Highlights of the study are that most men and women marry at some time during their lives; 85% of men and 88% of women have been married only once; husbands and wives tend to have similar levels of education; 81% of married men and 47% of married women were in the labor force in 1977; and the earnings of the wife were about equal to or greater than the husband's earnings among one married couple in three in which the wife had earnings. (DB)

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Perspectives on American Husbands and Wives

by
Stephen Rawlings

Special Studies
Series P-23, No. 77

Issued December 1978

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Symbols Used in Tables

— Represents zero or rounds to zero.
B Base is too small to show derived measure.
... Not applicable.

Perspectives on American Husbands and Wives

INTRODUCTION

This report presents an analysis of the demographic and economic characteristics of married couples. The study is based both on a new set of tables that permit an examination of the joint characteristics of husbands and wives, and on information that was already available from existing data sets.

In the past few years, Census Bureau reports on the current composition of the American household and family have tended to emphasize such changes as increases in the number of persons living alone, gains in the number of unmarried couples, and the growing proportion of mothers maintaining one-parent families. As striking as the growth of these groups has been, only a minority of the total population is likely to experience any of these types of living arrangements for more than a short-term interval. Often that interval is a transitional period between marriages or a period that precedes or follows the far more universal living experience of marriage.

Past history indicates that almost everyone will be either a husband or a wife at some point in their life. Typically, a person who has entered a marital union will stay in that union for the remainder of their life, although a growing proportion will not. Similarly, most of these married persons will eventually have children, or take a job, or both, although some husbands and wives will forego one or both of these options.

Traditionally, most married women, and particularly those who were mothers, have accepted the demands and rewards of work inside the home. Only the husband was encouraged to continue his education, or enter the labor force, and thereby provide most, if not all, of the family's income. As long as this situation continued, it was perhaps not surprising that many persons considered it sufficient to describe the social and economic status of the family by referring only to the characteristics of the husband—his education, his occupation, his income, etc.

Today's wives, however, are increasingly likely to have completed high school and perhaps some years of college, to participate in the labor force, and to contribute to the family income. Thus, the demarcation between many of the roles of husbands and wives has become less distinct. The sole breadwinner has given way in many instances to dual breadwinners. Similarly, many working wives and mothers are coming to expect more involvement and assistance from their husbands in carrying out the childrearing and housekeeping responsibilities of the family.

In light of these developments, total reliance on the characteristics of the man when describing married couples is likely to result in misleading conclusions which do not always correspond to reality. A recent report to a United Nations conference on the revision of concepts related to family and household data pointed out that it is still sufficient to describe single-parent families in terms of the age, sex, employment status, occupation, etc., of one person. This approach, however, is no longer appropriate with married couples, for the life patterns and conditions of married couples (with or without children) are the product of various combinations of the husband's and wife's social and economic characteristics.[1]

HIGHLIGHTS

- Most men and women marry at some time during their lives. In 1977, only about 6 percent of men and 4 percent of women in their early fifties had never married.
- Most married men and women have been married only once—85 percent of the men and 88 percent of the women.
- The number of interracial couples has been increasing (a one-third increase between 1970 and 1977), but that number still comprises only about 1 percent of all married couples.
- Husbands and wives tend to have similar levels of education. Among men who had completed high school but no college, about two-thirds of their wives had the same amount of education.

[1] "Basic Reflections on the Use of Some Household, Family, and Dwelling Concepts for Population and Housing Censuses" an unpublished paper presented by Danmarks Statistik at a United Nations conference held in Geneva, September 1977.

- Young children living with two parents are likely to have the company of at least one brother or sister.
- Both the husband and the wife are likely to vote in a Presidential election; among two-thirds of all married couples, both the husband and wife voted in 1976.
- Most married men (81 percent) and nearly half of the married women (47 percent) were in the labor force in 1977.
- Among a minority of married couples (about 1 in every 6) both spouses work at year-round full-time jobs.
- The median family income in 1976 for families with two earners (the husband and wife) was $17,570.
- The earnings of the wife were about equal to or greater than the husband's earnings among 1 married couple in 3 in which the wife had earnings.

Ages of Husbands and Wives

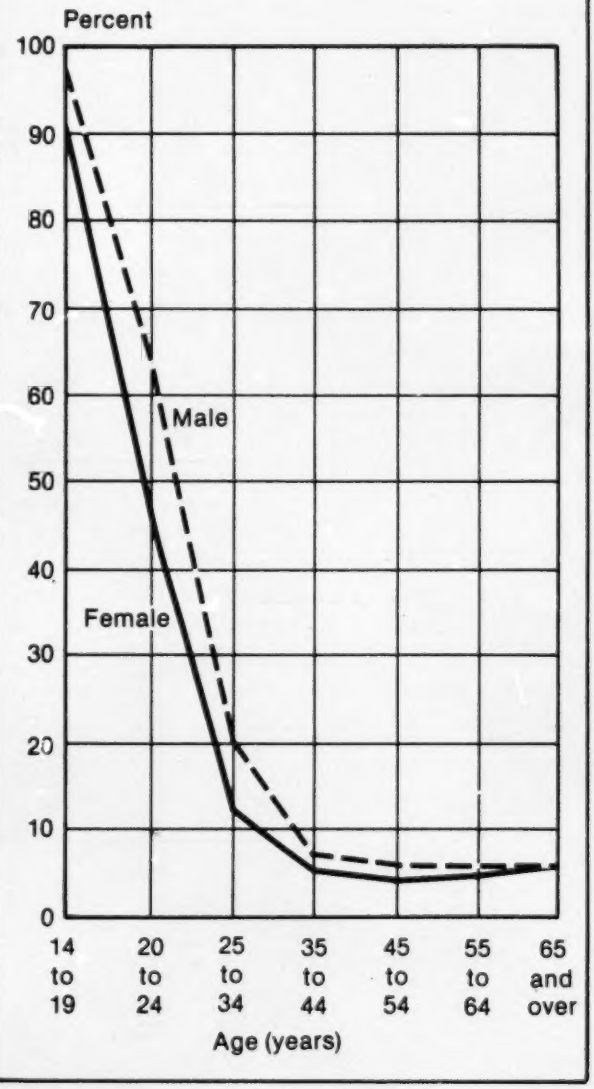
Age at Marriage

Marriage is something that virtually all Americans experience at some time in their lives. Some may postpone marriage, while others enjoy it, endure it, or terminate it; but very few people can, or wish to, escape it completely. One-half of the men currently make their initial entry into marriage by the age of 24.0 years. One-half of the women marry for the first time by the age of 21.6 years (table 1).

The age at which people marry is determined by many forces, including economics, warfare, and the pool of available potential mates. In the years since the mid-1950's, these factors have interacted in such a way so as to bring about nearly a 1½-year increase in the median age at which men and women first marry. As one consequence, the median age at first marriage today is about the same as it was in 1940. Throughout this century, the median age at first marriage has fluctuated between about 22 and 26 years for men, and between about 20 and 22 years for women, but these fluctuations have been much less dramatic than the recent changes in the proportion of persons who have been delaying marriage.

Very few people marry in their teens. The relative rarity of teenage marriage accounts for the fact that in 1977, 98 percent of the men 14 to 19 years of age and 91 percent of their female counterparts had never been married. The pace of matrimony after young adults reach their twenties, however, is sufficient to bring about a rapid decline in the proportion of persons who have never married (figure 1). Among those 25 to 34 years old in 1977, only 20 percent of the men and 12 percent of the women were still single; among those 45 to 54, the corresponding figures were 6 percent and 4 percent. In future years, the proportion of men and women who never marry at any time during their lives may be expected to rise a few percentage points above these low levels, according to present estimates.

FIGURE 1.
Never-Married Persons, by Age: March 1977



Differences in the Ages of Husbands and Wives

In terms of age distribution, wives tend to be younger than husbands. This situation is predictable, given the fact that through the years most men have tended to select a mate

who is somewhat younger than themselves, or conversely, most women have tended to select a mate somewhat older. About 30 percent of all husbands were under age 35 in 1977, as compared with 37 percent of all wives. Overall, half of all husbands were age 45.1, whereas the median age for wives was 41.9 (table 2).

Although some men in midlife and later years may take a much younger bride, this is not a very common occurrence, for in reality only a small proportion of such unions include couples with a wide difference in age. For instance, among married men age 45 and over, only about 1 in 900 had a wife under age 25. By comparison, 9 out of 10 husbands under age 25 had a wife who was also under 25 (table 3).

A majority of husbands and their wives tend to have the same (or about the same) age, race, religion, social class, etc. In 1977, among 59 percent of all couples, the husband was either the same age, or no more than 4 years older than the wife. Another 20 percent of all husbands were 5 to 9 years older than their spouse. In only about 7 percent of all couples was the husband 10 or more years older (table 4).

In about 14 percent of all couples, the husband was the younger of the pair. This situation was most common among wives who were age 65 or older; about 25 percent of wives of this age were older than their husbands. Since women generally live longer than men, one would expect that widows who remarry would tend to choose a man younger than themselves.

TABLE 1.

Median Age at First Marriage, by Sex: 1890 to 1977

Year	Male[1]	Female	Year	Male[1]	Female
1977	24.0	21.6	1958	22.6	20.2
1976	23.8	21.3	1957	22.6	20.3
1975	23.5	21.1	1956	22.5	20.1
1974	23.1	21.1	1955	22.6	20.2
1973	23.2	21.0	1954	23.0	20.3
1972	23.3	20.9	1953	22.8	20.2
1971	23.1	20.9	1952	23.0	20.2
1970	23.2	20.8	1951	22.9	20.4
1969	23.2	20.8	1950	22.8	20.3
1968	23.1	20.8	1949	22.7	20.3
1967	23.1	20.6	1948	23.3	20.4
1966	22.8	20.5			
1965	22.8	20.6	1947	23.7	20.5
1964	23.1	20.5	1940	24.3	21.5
1963	22.8	20.5	1930	24.3	21.3
1962	22.7	20.3	1920	24.6	21.2
1961	22.8	20.3	1910	25.1	21.6
1960	22.8	20.3	1900	25.9	21.9
1959	22.5	20.2	1890	26.1	22.0

[1]Figures for 1947 to 1977 are based on Current Population Survey data supplemented by data from the Department of Defense on marital status by age for men in the Armed Forces. Figures for earlier dates are from decennial censuses.

TABLE 2.

Percent Distribution of Husbands and Wives, by Age: March 1977

Age	Husbands	Wives
Total.....(thousands)..	48,002	48,002
Percent.....	100.0	100.0
14 to 34 years.....	30.4	36.6
35 to 44 years.....	19.4	19.4
45 to 64 years.....	36.1	34.0
65 years and over.....	14.1	10.0
Median age.....(years)..	45.1	41.9

TABLE 3.

Age of Wife, by Age of Husband: March 1977

(For meaning of symbols, see text)

Husbands and wives, by age of husband	All couples		Age of wife					
	Number (thousands)	Percent	14 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over
Husbands, all ages.....	48,002	100.0	11.4	25.2	19.4	19.2	14.8	10.0
14 to 24 years.....	3,257	100.0	91.0	8.8	0.2	-	-	-
25 to 34 years.....	11,339	100.0	21.2	75.4	3.1	0.2	-	-
35 to 44 years.....	9,323	100.0	1.0	31.6	62.9	4.2	0.2	-
45 to 54 years.....	9,460	100.0	0.2	2.9	29.6	61.7	5.4	0.2
55 to 64 years.....	7,846	100.0	0.1	0.4	3.2	34.6	56.6	5.1
65 years and over.....	6,777	100.0	-	0.2	0.5	3.6	31.2	64.6
Wives, all ages.....(thousands)..	48,002	(X)	5,486	12,101	9,312	9,214	7,093	4,797
Percent.....	...	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Age of husband:								
14 to 24 years.....	...	6.8	54.0	2.4	0.1	-	-	-
25 to 34 years.....	...	23.6	43.7	70.7	3.8	0.3	-	-
35 to 44 years.....	...	19.4	1.7	24.3	63.0	4.3	0.3	-
45 to 54 years.....	...	19.7	0.3	2.2	30.1	63.3	7.2	0.5
55 to 64 years.....	...	16.3	0.1	0.3	2.7	29.5	62.6	8.3
65 years and over.....	...	14.1	-	0.1	0.3	2.6	29.8	91.2

TABLE 4.

Difference Between Ages of Husband and Wife, by Age: March 1977

Age	All couples		Husband older						
	Number (thousands)	Percent	10 years or more	5 to 9 years	3 or 4 years	2 years	1 year	Same age	Husband younger
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION									
Age of Husband:									
All ages.....	48,002	100.0	7.2	19.6	20.2	13.2	13.2	12.1	14.4
Under 35 years.....	14,594	100.0	1.1	11.4	20.6	16.3	18.4	16.8	15.5
35 to 44 years.....	9,324	100.0	5.6	20.6	22.2	14.2	12.9	11.3	13.2
45 to 54 years.....	9,459	100.0	8.2	21.7	19.5	11.8	11.5	11.4	15.8
55 to 59 years.....	4,226	100.0	9.0	25.0	20.1	11.9	11.1	9.1	13.8
60 and 61 years.....	1,523	100.0	10.5	21.3	23.4	10.8	9.1	9.3	15.6
62 to 64 years.....	2,097	100.0	11.9	24.8	17.9	12.4	9.2	8.7	15.1
65 to 69 years.....	2,845	100.0	13.2	27.1	19.3	9.0	8.5	9.0	13.8
70 years and over.....	3,933	100.0	21.5	28.3	16.9	8.7	8.0	7.0	9.7
Age of wife:									
All ages.....	48,002	100.0	7.2	19.6	20.2	13.2	13.2	12.1	14.4
Under 35 years.....	17,587	100.0	5.8	16.5	21.5	15.3	16.4	13.9	10.6
35 to 44 years.....	9,312	100.0	8.3	21.6	21.1	13.0	12.1	11.3	12.6
45 to 54 years.....	9,214	100.0	8.0	22.1	19.3	12.3	11.6	11.7	15.0
55 to 59 years.....	4,044	100.0	8.9	21.4	20.0	11.0	11.3	9.5	17.9
60 and 61 years.....	1,289	100.0	8.7	23.0	18.5	13.7	9.8	11.1	15.3
62 to 64 years.....	1,760	100.0	8.5	22.2	19.0	10.5	9.5	10.4	20.0
65 to 69 years.....	2,366	100.0	7.7	19.7	17.5	10.0	10.8	10.8	23.6
70 years and over.....	2,431	100.0	5.3	18.8	16.5	10.8	10.9	11.4	26.3

Remarriage and Intermarriage

Marital History

A large majority of husbands and wives do not have a history of previous marriage. In 1975 (the most recent year for which data on marital history are available), about 85 percent of all married men and 88 percent of the women had been married to only their current partner. In 8 out of 10 married couples (79 percent), *both* the husband and wife had been married only once (table 5).

In about 6 percent of all married couples, the husband had been married only once, but the wife had been widowed (1 percent) or divorced (5 percent). For another 9 percent of married couples, the situation was reversed; the wife had been married only once, but the husband had been either widowed (2 percent) or divorced (7 percent). In the remaining 7 percent of married couples, both the husband and wife had been married more than once, and most of those in this category (6 percent) had terminated a previous marriage by divorce.

As one would expect, the proportion of married couples in which the two spouses had been married only once decreases with age. Among couples in which the husband was under 25, 92 percent of the two spouses had married only once, whereas among couples in which the husband was 75 or over, 68 percent had been married no more than once.

Almost none (0.2 percent) of the couples with the husband under age 25 included a wife who had been widowed. At this age range, divorce is a considerably greater risk than widowhood, as evidenced by the fact that in about 7 percent of these unions either the husband or the wife had already been divorced.

Among 19 percent of the couples including a husband 75 years or older, at least one of the spouses had been widowed. In about 14 percent of these unions, one or both of the spouses had been divorced; this figure would have been higher if these older married persons had become divorced in their younger years to the extent that some of their more youthful counterparts have. For instance, in 20 percent of the marriages involving a husband age 35 to 44 in 1975, at least one of the partners had already experienced a divorce. Obviously the proportion of this group affected by divorce will not decrease but rather can be expected to increase further over the next several years as the members grow older.

Interracial and Interethnic Marriage

The number of interracial marriages in the United States continues to increase. Between the 1960 and 1970 censuses, the number of married couples consisting of husbands and wives of different races increased by 108 percent (from 148,000 to 310,000). The corresponding increase between 1970 and 1977 was 36 percent (from 310,000 to 421,000). Of the 421,000 interracial couples in 1977, 125,000 were Black/White couples; this category of couples increased by 60,000, or 92 percent over the 1970 figure (65,000). Three-fourths of the Black/White couples in 1977 had a Black husband and a White wife (figure 2 and table 6).

Despite the continuing increase in interracial marriage, it is still a rare occurrence. The 421,000 interracial couples in 1977 accounted for barely 1 percent of all 48 million married couples.

The marriage of persons of Spanish origin to persons of other ethnic origins is a considerably more frequent occurrence than interracial marriage. In 1977, there were 762,000 couples in which one spouse was of Spanish origin and one was not. In about one-half of these couples, the wife was of Spanish origin (table 7). Although the 762,000 persons of Spanish origin living with a spouse who was not of Spanish origin involved less than 2 percent of all married couples, they accounted for 31 percent of the 2.4 million couples in which the husband and/or wife were of Spanish origin.

FIGURE 2.

Interracial (Black/White) Couples 1977 and 1970

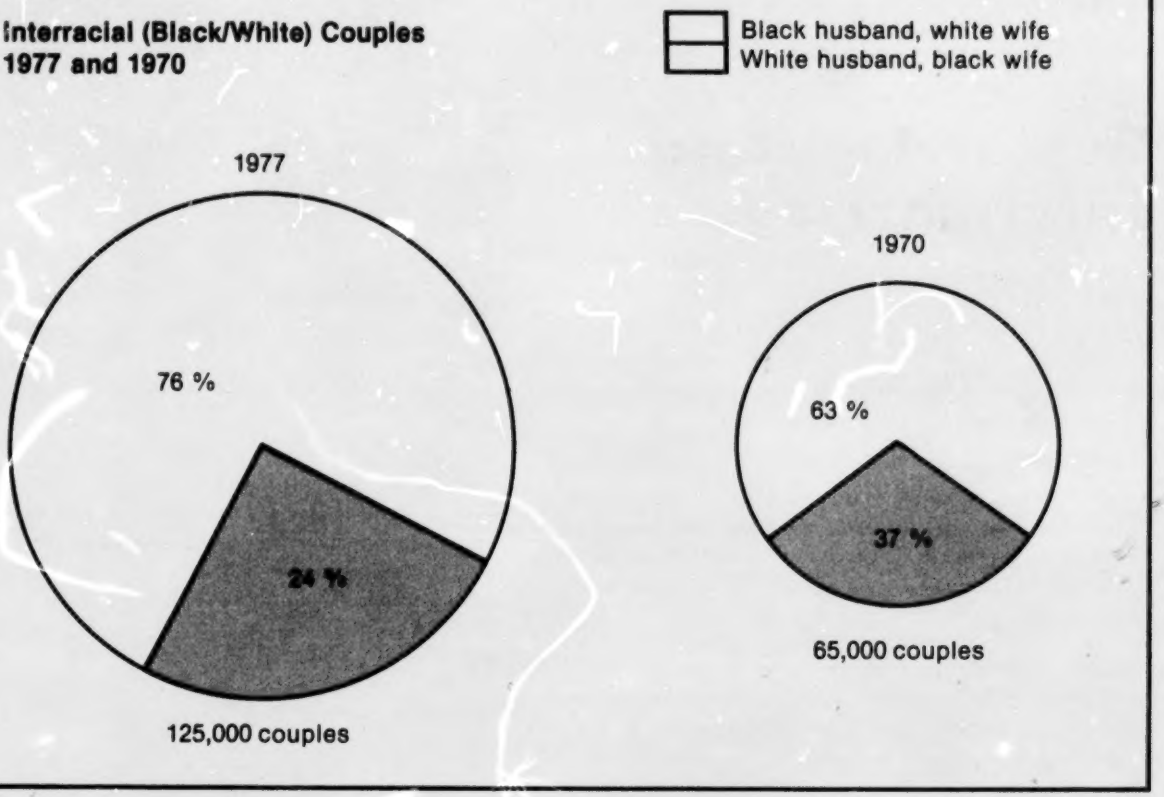


TABLE 5.

Marital History of Husband and Wife, by Age, Race, and Spanish Origin: June 1975

(For meaning of symbols, see text)

Subject	All couples		Both married once	Husband married once, wife previously--		Wife married once, husband previously--		Both remarried		
	Number (thousands)	Percent		Widowed	Divorced	Widowed	Divorced	Total	Both previously divorced	Not both previously divorced
ALL RACES										
Husbands, all ages	45,907	100.0	78.7	1.3	4.6	2.0	6.8	6.6	5.5	1.1
14 to 24 years	3,030	100.0	92.4	0.2	4.1	-	1.3	2.0	2.0	-
25 to 34 years	10,504	100.0	83.8	0.4	5.3	0.1	4.3	6.1	6.0	0.1
35 to 44 years	8,969	100.0	78.0	1.3	5.2	0.4	8.3	6.8	6.3	0.5
45 to 54 years	9,342	100.0	77.3	1.4	5.1	1.4	8.4	6.4	5.6	0.8
55 to 64 years	7,675	100.0	75.7	2.1	3.9	3.0	8.3	7.0	5.4	1.6
65 to 74 years	4,471	100.0	72.1	2.1	3.2	6.6	7.8	8.2	4.9	3.3
75 years and over	1,915	100.0	67.5	2.2	2.8	11.0	5.7	10.9	5.1	5.8
Wives, all ages	45,907	100.0	78.7	1.3	4.6	2.0	6.8	6.6	5.5	1.1
14 to 24 years	5,154	100.0	88.0	0.1	2.4	-	1.9	7.6	7.3	0.3
25 to 34 years	11,166	100.0	80.4	0.4	5.2	0.3	6.1	7.6	7.0	0.5
35 to 44 years	9,041	100.0	78.6	1.0	5.4	0.8	8.5	5.7	5.1	0.6
45 to 54 years	9,283	100.0	77.5	1.9	5.0	1.8	8.1	5.8	4.6	1.2
55 to 64 years	6,797	100.0	75.0	2.3	4.3	3.9	7.8	6.7	4.6	2.1
65 to 74 years	3,510	100.0	72.6	2.7	4.2	7.7	6.5	6.3	3.3	3.0
75 years and over	955	100.0	72.0	4.0	2.5	10.5	5.3	5.7	2.7	3.0
WHITE										
Husbands, all ages	41,978	100.0	79.4	1.3	4.5	1.9	6.8	6.2	5.1	1.1
14 to 24 years	2,779	100.0	92.0	0.2	4.3	-	1.4	2.2	2.2	-
25 to 34 years	9,584	100.0	83.8	0.5	5.3	0.1	4.4	5.9	5.8	0.1
35 to 44 years	8,072	100.0	78.4	1.1	5.0	0.4	8.6	6.4	6.0	0.5
45 to 54 years	8,589	100.0	78.4	1.4	4.9	1.3	8.3	5.7	5.0	0.7
55 to 64 years	7,095	100.0	76.4	2.1	3.7	2.9	8.3	6.7	5.1	1.6
65 to 74 years	4,108	100.0	73.2	2.1	3.0	6.5	7.4	7.8	4.3	3.5
75 years and over	1,751	100.0	70.3	2.0	2.7	10.5	4.3	10.1	4.7	5.4
Wives, all ages	41,978	100.0	79.4	1.3	4.5	1.9	6.8	6.2	5.1	1.1
14 to 24 years	4,701	100.0	87.7	0.1	2.4	-	2.0	7.7	7.5	0.2
25 to 34 years	10,116	100.0	80.7	0.4	5.3	0.3	6.4	7.0	6.5	0.5
35 to 44 years	8,170	100.0	79.3	1.0	5.2	0.8	8.6	5.2	4.6	0.6
45 to 54 years	8,517	100.0	78.5	1.7	4.6	1.7	8.0	5.5	4.3	1.1
55 to 64 years	6,317	100.0	76.0	2.3	4.1	3.8	7.4	6.4	4.3	2.1
65 to 74 years	3,267	100.0	73.6	2.6	4.1	7.3	6.3	6.1	3.2	2.9
75 years and over	891	100.0	74.2	3.8	2.5	10.1	4.2	5.2	2.3	2.8
BLACKS										
Husbands, all ages	3,343	100.0	69.6	1.7	6.5	3.1	7.7	11.5	9.9	1.5
14 to 24 years	216	100.0	96.5	0.6	2.3	-	0.6	-	-	-
25 to 34 years	766	100.0	82.8	-	6.2	-	3.2	7.8	7.6	0.2
35 to 44 years	744	100.0	71.4	2.2	7.5	0.7	6.3	11.9	11.2	0.7
45 to 54 years	650	100.0	61.8	1.7	8.3	2.8	9.3	16.1	14.2	1.9
55 to 64 years	498	100.0	64.7	2.1	7.1	5.0	9.1	12.1	9.2	2.8
65 to 74 years	318	100.0	56.4	2.7	4.5	9.0	13.9	13.4	12.0	1.4
75 years and over	150	100.0	33.9	4.6	3.8	16.7	22.6	18.4	9.4	8.9
Wives, all ages	3,343	100.0	69.6	1.7	6.5	3.1	7.7	11.5	9.9	1.5
14 to 24 years	392	100.0	91.3	0.3	1.8	-	1.1	5.5	4.6	0.9
25 to 34 years	857	100.0	74.9	0.6	5.3	0.5	3.5	15.1	14.3	0.8
35 to 44 years	744	100.0	69.0	0.8	7.7	1.7	8.6	12.1	10.9	1.2
45 to 54 years	657	100.0	65.0	2.8	9.5	3.0	9.9	9.9	8.4	1.5
55 to 64 years	418	100.0	58.3	2.4	7.8	5.2	14.0	12.4	9.6	2.7
65 to 74 years	218	100.0	55.5	4.7	4.9	15.4	10.1	9.3	4.3	5.1
75 years and over	57	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
SPANISH ORIGIN[1]										
Husbands, all ages	1,875	100.0	79.4	0.9	5.5	1.1	5.5	7.6	6.3	1.3
14 to 24 years	179	100.0	96.5	-	2.7	-	-	0.8	0.8	-
25 to 34 years	548	100.0	82.5	0.8	7.1	-	4.1	5.5	5.2	0.3
35 to 44 years	474	100.0	78.3	0.6	5.3	0.3	7.5	8.0	7.1	0.9
45 to 54 years	332	100.0	78.4	0.8	6.6	1.5	7.3	5.4	4.8	0.5
55 to 64 years	216	100.0	68.8	0.7	5.1	2.3	7.9	15.2	12.4	2.8
65 to 74 years	94	100.0	68.4	5.1	1.8	6.2	5.3	13.1	6.5	6.7
75 years and over	32	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Wives, all ages	1,875	100.0	79.4	0.9	5.5	1.1	5.5	7.6	6.3	1.3
14 to 24 years	298	100.0	93.3	-	-	-	2.2	4.5	4.5	-
25 to 34 years	573	100.0	80.0	0.5	6.2	0.3	5.1	7.9	6.5	1.3
35 to 44 years	437	100.0	78.1	1.4	7.6	0.4	7.2	5.4	4.6	0.7
45 to 54 years	320	100.0	75.4	-	5.3	1.5	7.0	10.8	9.4	1.4
55 to 64 years	136	100.0	73.0	0.6	6.2	4.0	7.0	9.1	6.9	2.2
65 to 74 years	81	100.0	60.9	7.9	9.6	7.9	3.9	9.8	4.2	5.6
75 years and over	9	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)

[1] Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

TABLE 6.

Interracial Married Couples: 1977 and 1970

(Numbers in thousands)

Race	1977	1970	Change, 1970 to 1977
Total married couples.....	48,002	44,597	3,405
Total interracial married couples..	421	310	111
All Black-White married couples.....	125	65	60
Husband Black, wife White.....	95	41	54
Wife Black, husband White.....	30	24	6
Other interracial married couples.....	296	245	51
Husband Black.....	20	8	12
Wife Black.....	2	4	-2
Husband White.....	177	139	38
Wife White.....	97	94	3

TABLE 7.

Race and Spanish Origin of Wife, by Race and Spanish Origin of Husband: March 1977

Race and Spanish origin of husband	All married couples	Race of wife			Origin of wife	
		White	Black	Other	Spanish	Other
All married couples..	48,002	43,793	3,383	826	2,080	45,922
Race of husband:						
White.....	43,809	43,601	30	177	2,029	41,780
Black.....	3,466	95	3,351	20	25	3,441
Other.....	727	97	2	629	26	701
Origin of husband:						
Spanish.....	2,030	1,982	22	27	1,675	356
Other.....	45,972	41,811	3,362	799	406	45,566

Educational Attainment of Husbands and Wives

Just as there is a tendency for persons to select marriage partners of the same race and age, husbands and wives usually have completed a similar number of years of school. Approximately two-thirds (65 percent) of the 16.5 million married men who had finished high school but had not attended college had a wife with the same education. Similarly, one-half (50 percent) of the 21.7 million married women who were high school graduates without college training also had husbands who had completed 12 years of school and no more (tables 8A, 8B, and figure 3). Overall, the proportion who completed high school but did not attend college was 34 percent for husbands and 45 percent for wives.

About 8.7 million husbands (18 percent) and 6.4 million wives (13 percent) had never attended high school. Like high school graduates who tend to marry other high school graduates, these persons generally marry another person who has completed no more than 8 years of school. One-half (49 percent) of the married men and two-thirds (67 percent) of the married women who had not attended high school had a spouse in the same educational category.

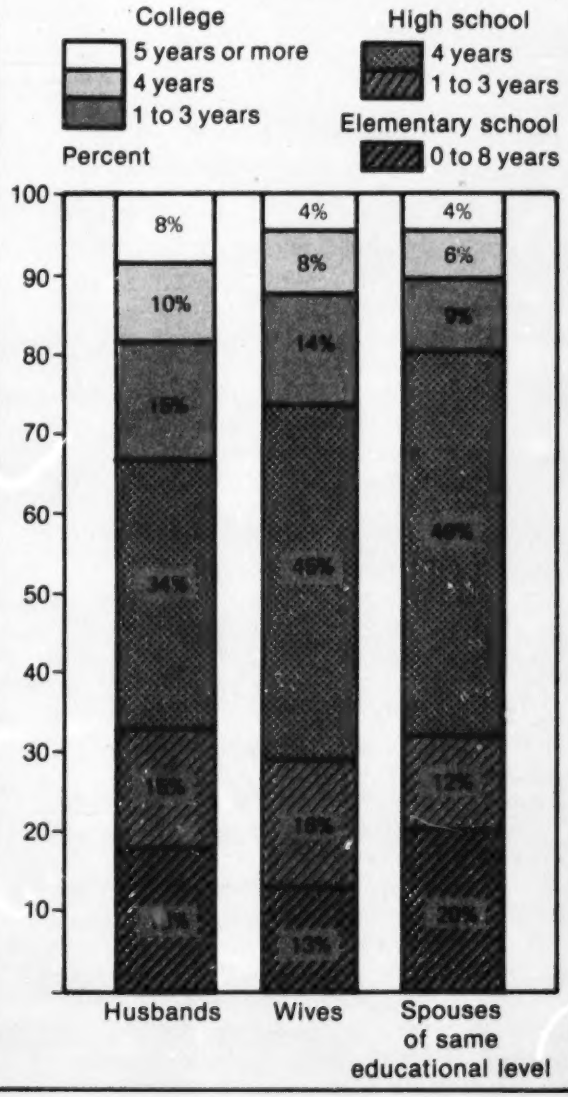
College graduates likewise demonstrate an affinity for persons who have finished a comparable number of years of school. About 18 percent of all husbands and 12 percent of all wives had completed 4 or more years of college, but 44 percent of the husbands who were college graduates and 69 percent of their female counterparts were married to someone who had also completed at least 4 years of college. Women with graduate school training were far more likely than their male counterparts to be married to a person with a similar amount of education (56 percent versus 23 percent).

The number of college graduates of marriageable age (especially those with graduate school training) is considerably larger for men than for women. This is one reason why women with higher education are more likely than men with higher education to marry a person who has completed a comparable number of years of school. A comparison of tables 9A, 9B, 10A, and 10B demonstrates the extent to which the pool of college graduates at the younger ages (under 45 years of age) has become far larger than at the older ages (45 and over).

Husbands and wives both who have similar amounts of education tend to differ from those who have different

FIGURE 3.

Educational Level of Husbands, Wives and Couples: March 1977



amounts of education with respect to such characteristics as family size, place of residence, and voting behavior. The following discussion deals with some of these differences.

Education, Family Size, and Presence of Children

The average size of married-couple families was 3.42 persons (table 11). Married couples with exactly 4 years of high school had the largest families, on the average (3.49 persons). The relationship between the educational level of the spouses, on one hand, and family size and presence of children, on the other, is undoubtedly affected by the heavy concentration of older couples among those with relatively little education. Thus, although married couples with less than 4 years of high school as well as those with 4 years or more of college had almost identical average family sizes (3.36 and 3.37 persons, respectively), those with little education far more often consisted of the husband and wife only (two persons), because a larger proportion of them had reached the age when their children had already left home. For different reasons, including the higher birth rate among the less educated, the proportion of families with seven persons or more was also higher among couples who were not high school graduates (6 percent) than among those with more education.

One-half of the married-couple families (52 percent) had at least one child under 18 years of age present in the home. Among couples with less than 4 years of high school, the proportion without a child under 18 years was higher (61 percent) than the proportion with a child (39 percent). Again, this finding is at least partially attributable to the fact that couples in this educational category are more likely to have seen their children reach maturity and leave home to establish a household of their own. For similar reasons, the highest proportion of married-couple families in which all children were under 6 years of age was found among those couples who were college graduates (21 percent), and the lowest proportion was found among those who were not high school graduates (7 percent).

The average number of children under 18 years of age per family was 1.06, but the average excluding families without children was 2.02 children. Thus, young children in married-couple families were likely to have the company of at least one brother or sister.

Education, Residence, and Mobility

The more years of school completed by both spouses, the more likely the couple is to be living in a metropolitan area. Two-thirds (66 percent) of all married couples lived in metropolitan areas. Among those with less than 4 years of high school, the proportion in metropolitan areas was 58 percent, whereas 80 percent of couples with 4 years of college or more were metropolitan residents (table 12).

The most geographically mobile couples also tend to be those with the most education. These couples (many of whom were relatively young) not only were more likely to move, but their moves were also more likely to involve moving outside their previous State of residence. For the purposes of this discussion, movers are considered to be all those persons living in a place in March 1977 which was different from their place of residence in March 1975. Among couples with less than 4 years of high school, about 20 percent were movers, but only 3 percent moved to a location outside their previous State of residence.

Education and Voting Behavior

The number of years of school completed by husbands and wives influences not only such general characteristics as the couple's family size and place of residence but also more specific activities such as whether or not they vote in national elections.

Among 61 percent of all married couples, both the husband and wife voted in the November 1976 Presidential election. In 8 percent of the couples only the husband voted, and in another 6 percent only the wife voted. Among 25 percent of the married couples, neither spouse voted (table 13).

If the focus is restricted to those married couples with little education (that is, neither the husband nor the wife had completed at least 4 years of high school), the findings show that both spouses were voters only 43 percent of the time. When only one spouse voted, it was more likely to be the husband (11 percent) than the wife (6 percent). In 39 percent of these families, neither spouse voted.

Both the husband and wife voted in 84 percent of the families in which both were college graduates (i.e., both had finished at least 4 years of college). If only one spouse voted, it was just as likely to be the wife as the husband (4 percent each). Neither the husband nor the wife voted in about 8 percent of these couples, a relatively small proportion when compared with the corresponding figures among those couples who had completed fewer years of school.

Education, Labor Force Participation, and Income

The employment and income characteristics of married-couple families are treated in more detail in other sections of the report. It is, however, useful to examine at this point how these variables relate to the joint educational level of the husband and wife.

It was much less common for both the husband and the wife to be in the labor force among couples who completed less than 4 years of high school (27 percent), than among college graduate couples (62 percent). Conversely, neither spouse was in the labor force in 30 percent of the couples with less than 4 years of high school, but this was true for only 6 percent of the college graduate couples. It should be remembered that many of the couples with the least formal schooling are also likely to be older couples who are retired, and consequently no longer in the work force.

The fact that husbands and wives were often both workers in college graduate couples doubtless contributes to the fact that these couples also had higher family incomes than couples who had completed fewer years of school. For example, the median family income of college graduate couples ($26,645) was more than twice the corresponding income ($10,434) among couples who had completed less than 4 years of high school (table 14).

TABLE 8A.

Education of Husband, by Education of Wife: March 1977

Education of husband	Total		Education of wife					
			Elementary	High school		College		
	Number (thousands)	Percent	0 to 8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	5 years or more
All husbands	48,002	100.0	13.4	16.0	45.1	13.8	8.2	3.5
Elementary:								
0 to 8 years	8,725	100.0	49.3	22.9	23.5	3.2	0.8	0.3
High school:								
1 to 3 years	7,063	100.0	13.6	37.3	42.0	5.3	1.4	0.3
4 years	16,468	100.0	5.4	14.5	65.2	10.5	3.2	1.0
College:								
1 to 3 years	6,938	100.0	3.0	7.0	49.8	28.9	8.6	2.7
4 years	4,787	100.0	0.9	2.4	33.5	27.4	28.9	6.8
5 years or more	4,022	100.0	0.8	1.5	20.8	22.8	31.0	23.1

TABLE 8B.

Education of Wife, by Education of Husband: March 1977

Education of wife	Total		Education of husband					
			Elementary	High school		College		
	Number (thousands)	Percent	0 to 8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	5 years or more
All wives	48,002	100.0	18.2	14.7	34.3	14.5	10.0	8.4
Elementary:								
0 to 8 years	6,438	100.0	66.8	15.0	13.9	3.2	0.7	0.5
High school:								
1 to 3 years	7,690	100.0	26.0	34.3	31.1	6.4	1.5	0.8
4 years	21,653	100.0	9.5	13.7	49.6	15.9	7.4	3.9
College:								
1 to 3 years	6,616	100.0	4.2	5.7	26.2	30.3	19.9	13.8
4 years	3,933	100.0	1.9	2.5	13.6	15.2	35.2	31.7
5 years or more	1,671	100.0	1.8	1.4	10.3	11.4	19.4	55.7

TABLE 9A.

Education of Husband Under Age 45, by Education of Wife: March 1977

Education of husband	Total		Education of wife					
			Elementary	High school		College		
	Number (thousands)	Percent	0 to 8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	5 years or more
Husband, under age 45...	23,918	100.0	5.7	14.5	48.2	16.8	10.5	4.4
Elementary:								
0 to 8 years.....	1,718	100.0	38.1	28.6	29.3	2.8	0.7	0.3
High School:								
1 to 3 years.....	3,166	100.0	10.2	39.7	43.4	5.1	1.5	0.3
4 years.....	9,286	100.0	3.0	15.2	67.3	10.7	3.0	0.8
College:								
1 to 3 years.....	4,307	100.0	1.7	6.0	49.1	31.8	8.7	2.7
4 years.....	2,952	100.0	0.2	1.4	29.5	29.4	32.3	7.1
5 years or more.....	2,490	100.0	0.8	0.7	16.3	22.9	33.7	25.6

TABLE 9B.

Education of Wife, by Education of Husband Under Age 45: March 1977

Education of wife	Total		Education of husband					
			Elementary	High school		College		
	Number (thousands)	Percent	0 to 8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	5 years or more
All wives, husband under age 45.....	23,918	100.0	7.2	13.2	38.8	18.0	12.3	10.4
Elementary:								
0 to 8 years.....	1,360	100.0	48.1	23.7	20.7	5.5	0.4	1.5
High School:								
1 to 3 years.....	3,479	100.0	14.1	36.1	40.6	7.4	1.2	0.5
4 years.....	11,518	100.0	4.4	11.9	54.2	18.4	7.6	3.5
College:								
1 to 3 years.....	4,009	100.0	1.2	4.0	24.7	34.2	21.7	14.2
4 years.....	2,505	100.0	0.5	1.9	11.1	14.9	38.1	33.5
5 years or more.....	1,046	100.0	0.6	0.8	6.9	11.1	20.0	60.9

TABLE 10A.

Education of Husband 45 Years Old and Over, by Education of Wife: March 1977

Husband and wives, by education of husband	Total		Education of wife					
			Elementary	High school		College		
	Number (thousands)	Percent	0 to 8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	5 years or more
Husbands, 45 years old and over	24,084	100.0	21.1	17.5	42.1	10.8	5.9	2.6
Elementary:								
0 to 8 years	7,008	100.0	52.0	21.5	22.0	3.2	0.9	0.3
High school:								
1 to 3 years	3,897	100.0	16.4	35.4	40.8	5.5	1.4	0.4
4 years	7,181	100.0	8.5	13.6	62.6	10.3	3.6	1.4
College:								
1 to 3 years	2,631	100.0	5.0	8.8	50.9	24.1	8.4	2.9
4 years	1,835	100.0	2.0	4.0	40.1	24.3	23.4	6.3
5 years or more	1,532	100.0	0.7	2.7	28.2	22.7	26.4	19.3

TABLE 10B.

Education of Wife, by Education of Husband 45 Years Old and Over: March 1977

Education of wife	Total		Education of husband					
			Elementary	High school		College		
	Number (thousands)	Percent	0 to 8 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	5 years or more
All wives, husband 45 years old and over	24,084	100.0	29.1	16.2	29.8	10.9	7.6	6.4
Elementary:								
0 to 8 years	5,079	100.0	71.7	12.6	12.1	2.6	0.7	0.2
High school:								
1 to 3 years	4,211	100.0	35.8	32.8	23.2	5.5	1.7	1.0
4 years	10,135	100.0	15.2	15.7	44.4	13.2	7.3	4.3
College:								
1 to 3 years	2,608	100.0	8.7	8.2	28.4	24.3	17.1	13.3
4 years	1,427	100.0	4.4	3.7	17.9	15.6	30.1	28.3
5 years or more	624	100.0	3.7	2.6	16.0	12.0	18.6	47.3

TABLE 11.

Family Size and Presence of Children by Age for Married-Couple Families, by Joint Educational Level of the Husband and Wife: March 1977

Size of family and presence of children by age	All married-couple families	Years of school completed by both husband and wife			
		Less than 4 years of high school	High school, 4 years	College, 1 to 3 years	College, 4 years or more
Total.....(thousands)..	47,497	10,387	11,479	2,180	1,066
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
SIZE OF FAMILY					
2 persons.....	36.2	45.3	31.3	35.6	32.8
3 persons.....	21.2	19.0	22.0	23.4	22.6
4 persons.....	21.6	14.3	25.3	25.4	26.6
5 persons.....	11.7	9.7	12.6	10.5	10.8
6 persons.....	5.3	5.5	5.2	3.3	5.3
7 or more persons.....	4.0	6.1	3.6	1.7	1.8
Average per family.....	3.42	3.36	3.49	3.26	3.37
PRESENCE AND AGE OF CHILDREN					
No children under 18 years.....	47.6	60.9	41.0	44.5	40.5
Some under 18 years.....	52.4	39.1	59.0	55.5	59.5
All under 6 years.....	12.5	6.6	15.1	18.5	21.2
Some under 6, some 6 to 17.....	10.9	8.7	12.1	10.8	11.6
All 6 to 17 years.....	28.9	23.9	31.9	26.2	26.6
Average number of children under 18:					
Per family.....	1.06	0.88	1.16	1.02	1.09
Per family with children.....	2.02	2.26	1.97	1.84	1.84

TABLE 12.

Metropolitan-Nonmetropolitan Residence and Mobility of Married-Couple Families, by Joint Educational Level of the Husband and Wife: March 1977

Residence and mobility	All married-couple families	Years of school completed by both husband and wife			
		Less than 4 years of high school	High school, 4 years	College, 1 to 3 years	College, 4 years or more
Total.....(thousands)..	47,497	10,387	11,479	2,180	1,066
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
RESIDENCE					
Metropolitan areas.....	65.8	58.3	65.0	74.2	79.5
Nonmetropolitan areas.....	34.2	41.7	35.0	25.8	20.5
MOBILITY					
Nonmovers.....	73.9	80.5	73.0	63.3	67.9
Movers.....	26.1	19.5	27.0	36.7	32.1
Same county.....	14.9	12.1	15.9	21.5	13.4
Same State.....	5.6	4.0	5.3	9.2	5.5
Different State.....	4.7	2.8	4.6	5.1	11.3
Other.....	1.0	0.5	1.2	0.9	1.9

TABLE 13.

Voter Participation of Married-Couple Families, by Joint Educational Level of the Husband and Wife: November 1976

Voter participation	All married-couple families	Years of school completed by both husband and wife			
		Less than 4 years of high school	High school, 4 years	College, 1 to 3 years	College, 4 years or more
Total reporting.....(thousands)..	44,992	9,295	10,057	1,909	3,637
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both husband and wife voted.....	60.8	42.8	60.6	71.4	83.9
Only husband voted.....	8.1	11.4	7.4	6.7	4.0
Only wife voted.....	6.5	6.4	7.2	5.9	4.0
Neither spouse voted.....	24.6	39.4	24.8	16.1	8.1

TABLE 14.

Labor Force Participation and Family Income, by Joint Educational Level of the Husband and Wife: March 1977

Labor force participation and family income	All married-couple families	Years of school completed by both husband and wife			
		Less than 4 years of high school	High school, 4 years	College, 1 to 3 years	College, 4 years or more
Total.....(thousands)..	47,497	10,387	11,479	2,180	1,066
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION					
In labor force:					
Husband and wife.....	42.2	26.8	48.2	53.1	62.1
Husband only.....	38.5	37.4	39.7	35.4	29.5
Wife only.....	4.5	5.9	3.4	3.7	2.7
Neither spouse.....	14.9	29.9	8.7	7.8	5.6
FAMILY INCOME					
Under $2,000.....	1.1	1.7	0.8	0.8	0.6
$2,000 to $4,999.....	5.3	14.1	2.4	2.2	0.8
$5,000 to $9,999.....	17.4	31.2	13.2	11.3	3.3
$10,000 to $14,999.....	20.6	22.4	21.9	18.3	8.1
$15,000 to $19,999.....	20.8	14.8	25.6	24.5	15.4
$20,000 to $24,999.....	14.5	8.0	17.1	17.9	14.0
$25,000 to $49,999.....	18.1	7.1	17.7	21.8	45.9
$50,000 and over.....	2.2	0.6	1.4	3.2	11.9
Median income .....(dollars)..	$16,013	$10,434	$16,800	$18,142	$26,645

Social Characteristics of Younger and Older Couples

As couples move from young adulthood toward their more mature years, they experience a series of changes. In their early years, the couple's family is likely to be a small, mobile unit. In their middle years, their family is generally larger and somewhat more stationary. At full maturity, the characteristics of the couple are again likely to change. The discussion in this section deals with married couples in relation to the age of the husband and wife.

Age, Family Size, and Presence of Children

Among couples in which the spouses were both either 14 to 24 years old or 25 to 34 years old, the average family size was 3.40 persons (table 15). Approximately one-half of these families (53 percent) were composed of two persons (the husband and wife) or the couple plus one additional family member. Almost always, this third person was their own child, but in a very few instances it was some other relative, such as a brother or sister, of one of the persons maintaining the family. The average number of children under 18 years of age in these families was 1.36.

By the time both the husband and wife approached their middle years (age 35 to 44), family size had grown to an average of 4.66 persons. Among couples in this age bracket, only about 18 percent consisted of less than four persons; the proportion in which only the husband and wife were present was 5 percent of the total. Nine out of 10 of these families had at least one child under 18 years of age who was living in the home, and the average number of children under 18 in these "early midlife" families was 2.24 persons.

As the husband and wife continued to grow older, their children, if any, had begun to reach young adulthood and leave their parental home to form households of their own. Once the couple reached retirement age (65 years and over), average family size had declined to 2.22 persons. About 87 percent of these families consisted of just the husband and wife, and rarely was the additional relative a child under 18.

Age, Residence, and Mobility

Close to two-thirds of all married couples lived in metropolitan areas. Those couples age 65 and over were somewhat more likely than their younger counterparts to be living in nonmetropolitan areas.

Since youth and mobility are positively related to one another, it is not surprising that the highest proportion of movers was found among couples in which both spouses were either 14 to 24 years old or 25 to 34 years old. About one-half (52 percent) of these couples had moved into a different house or apartment at some time during the 2 years prior to the 1977 survey. The vast majority of these movers had shifted to another residence in the same State, but about 11 percent of these young couples had moved outside their previous State of residence (table 16). This proportion was twice that exhibited by couples in any other age bracket.

Among couples age 65 and over, only 7 percent moved at all, and most of those who did move did not leave their previous county of residence. The extent to which the shifts in residence that did occur were from a house which had been large enough to serve the family in past years to more manageable living quarters is not shown by the available data.

Age, Homeownership, and Renting

A substantial majority of married couples (76 percent) in 1977 were owners of the home in which they resided (table 18). The lowest proportion of homeowners was that among couples in which the husband was under 35 (57 percent) and the highest proportions were among husbands age 45 to 54 or 55 to 64 (86 or 87 percent). By the time the husbands had reached the 65-and-over age bracket, the proportion owning their homes had declined only slightly (to 84 percent). The distribution of homeownership by age of wife is similar to the distribution by age of husband. The proportions for corresponding age groups never differed by more than 3 percent. White couples were more likely to be homeowners than Black couples (78 percent versus 61 percent).

TABLE 15.

Family Size and Presence of Children for Married-Couple Families, by Joint Age Level of the Husband and Wife: March 1977

(For meaning of symbols, see text)

Size of family and presence of children	All married-couple families	Age of both husband and wife				
		14 to 24 or 25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over
Total.....(thousands)..	47,497	11,279	5,844	5,810	4,422	4,319
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
SIZE OF FAMILY						
2 persons.....	36.2	26.9	5.4	28.1	65.8	86.9
3 persons.....	21.2	26.0	12.4	27.8	22.0	9.4
4 persons.....	21.6	30.4	31.9	20.7	7.6	2.3
5 persons.....	11.7	11.8	25.1	12.3	2.6	0.7
6 persons.....	5.3	3.5	13.5	6.1	1.2	0.5
7 or more persons.....	4.0	1.4	11.6	5.0	0.7	0.2
Average per family.....	3.42	3.40	4.66	3.61	2.57	2.22
PRESENCE AND AGE OF CHILDREN						
No children under 18 years.....	47.6	27.8	9.7	53.4	92.3	99.6
Some under 18 years.....	52.4	72.2	90.3	46.6	7.7	0.4
All under 6 years.....	12.5	34.7	2.6	0.3	-	-
Some under 6, some 6 to 17.....	10.9	22.4	16.2	1.3	0.1	-
All 6 to 17 years.....	28.9	15.1	71.5	45.1	7.6	0.4
Average number of children under 18:						
Per family.....	1.06	1.36	2.24	0.76	0.10	0.01
Per family with children.....	2.02	1.88	2.48	1.63	1.26	1.37

TABLE 16.

Metropolitan-Nonmetropolitan Residence and Mobility of Married-Couple Families, by Joint Age Level of the Husband and Wife: March 1977

Residence and mobility	All married-couple families	Age of both husband and wife				
		14 to 24 or 25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over
Total.....(thousands)..	47,497	11,279	5,844	5,810	4,422	4,319
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
RESIDENCE						
Metropolitan areas.....	65.8	65.9	66.3	69.6	66.9	60.1
Nonmetropolitan areas.....	34.2	34.1	33.7	30.4	33.1	39.9
MOBILITY						
Nonmovers.....	73.9	48.2	81.6	88.3	90.5	93.4
Movers.....	26.1	51.8	18.4	11.7	9.5	6.6
Same county.....	14.9	29.9	9.6	6.7	4.6	3.7
Same State.....	5.6	11.1	3.5	2.8	2.7	1.4
Different State.....	4.7	8.9	4.3	1.9	1.9	1.4
Other.....	1.0	1.9	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.1

TABLE 17.

Labor Force Participation and Family Income for Married-Couple Families, by Joint Age Level of the Husband and Wife: March 1977

Labor force participation and family income	All married-couple families	Age of both husband and wife				
		14 to 24 or 25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over
Total.....(thousands)..	47,497	11,279	5,844	5,810	4,422	4,319
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION						
In Labor Force.....						
Husband and wife.....	42.2	50.6	54.1	50.0	31.0	2.9
Husband only.....	38.5	42.8	41.5	43.5	43.8	13.4
Wife only.....	4.5	3.1	2.1	3.0	7.3	3.6
Neither spouse.....	14.9	3.5	2.3	3.6	17.9	80.1
FAMILY INCOME						
Under $2,000.....	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.1
$2,000 to $4,999.....	5.3	3.3	1.9	1.9	5.1	18.8
$5,000 to $9,999.....	17.4	17.9	8.0	8.4	17.0	42.8
$10,000 to $14,999.....	20.6	26.3	15.8	15.3	18.8	18.2
$15,000 to $19,999.....	20.8	25.7	23.8	19.6	20.2	8.7
$20,000 to $24,999.....	14.5	14.1	20.5	18.1	14.3	4.4
$25,000 to $49,999.....	18.1	11.1	25.5	31.6	19.9	5.0
$50,000 and over.....	2.2	0.6	3.5	4.2	3.5	1.0
Median income.....(dollars)..	$16,013	$15,285	$19,878	$20,837	$16,543	$7,660

TABLE 18.

Tenure by Age of Husband and Wife, by Race: March 1977

(Numbers in thousands)

Race and tenure	All married-couple families	Age of husband or wife				
		14 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over
ALL RACES						
Tenure by Age of Husband						
Total	47,497	14,271	9,279	9,427	7,812	6,709
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owners	76.2	57.0	81.5	86.7	86.3	83.6
Renters	23.8	43.0	18.5	13.3	13.7	16.4
Tenure by Age of Wife						
Total	47,497	17,239	9,283	9,178	7,059	4,738
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owners	76.2	60.1	84.2	87.4	85.8	83.6
Renters	23.8	40.0	15.8	12.6	14.2	16.4
WHITE						
Tenure by Age of Husband						
Total	43,397	12,994	8,344	8,618	7,237	6,205
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owners	77.7	58.8	83.1	88.1	87.3	84.5
Renters	22.3	41.2	16.9	11.9	12.7	15.5
Tenure by Age of Wife						
Total	43,397	15,605	8,393	8,403	6,579	4,416
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owners	77.7	61.9	85.7	88.5	87.1	84.1
Renters	22.3	38.2	14.3	11.5	12.9	15.9
BLACK						
Tenure by Age of Husband						
Total	3,406	1,056	749	671	497	434
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owners	61.4	39.1	68.9	71.6	73.6	73.0
Renters	38.6	60.9	31.1	28.4	26.4	27.0
Tenure by Age of Wife						
Total	3,406	1,332	718	639	420	297
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owners	61.4	43.2	71.6	76.7	66.9	78.5
Renters	38.6	56.8	28.6	23.3	33.3	21.9

Employment of Characteristics of Married Couples

Until a decade or two ago, it was possible to obtain a reasonably clear picture of the economic characteristics of married-couple families simply by examining the employment status and income of the husband. The importance of such information diminishes, however, as more wives enter the labor force and contribute significantly to the family's income. In this section, the employment status of the husband and wife refers to the *week* before the March 1977 Current Population Survey, and the income of the couple refers to the 1976 calendar *year*.

Participation in the Labor Force

Although husbands are less likely now than formerly to be the sole breadwinner for the family, the proportion who were in the labor force in March 1977 was still relatively high (81 percent). In that year, close to one-half (47 percent) of all married women were in the labor force; that level of participation is substantially higher than in the past.

Among married men, the participation in the labor force was highest (96 percent) for those in the middle years of 35 to 44 (table 19). These men generally have completed their formal schooling and are too young to retire. Consequently, they are under great social and economic pressure to work, and the vast majority of them do so.

By contrast, it was the youngest wives (those under 25) who were most likely to be in the labor force (58 percent). The participation of wives 25 to 34 years old declined slightly to 52 percent, as many of these women dropped out of the labor force to devote themselves to a period of full-time childrearing. Once past the primary childbearing years, larger proportions of women returned to the labor force for a while, and the participation rate among those age 35 to 44 rose to 56 percent. At older ages the worker rate declined.

As one would expect, most husbands and wives drop out of the labor force and enter retirement after age 65. Among those age 65 and over, the proportion still working or job-hunting had declined to 21 percent for men and 7 percent for women.

Working Wives and Mothers

Married women who had one or more children under 18 years of age were just as likely to be members of the labor force (48 percent) as married women who did not have such a child (45 percent). There are substantial differences when consideration is given to the age of the wife as well as the presence of children.

The highest participation rate (82 percent) was among married women age 25 to 34 who did not have children. This group of women includes many well-educated women who are devoting their main energies to a working career outside the home. By contrast, among the corresponding group of wives who had at least one child under 18, 46 percent were in the labor force; this proportion is much lower but still quite high as compared with earlier times.

The disparity between wives in and out of the labor force was just as great for those under age 25 (figure 4). Among wives with no children, 77 percent were either working or looking for work outside the home, but the corresponding proportion for wives with a child under 18 was 41 percent (table 20).

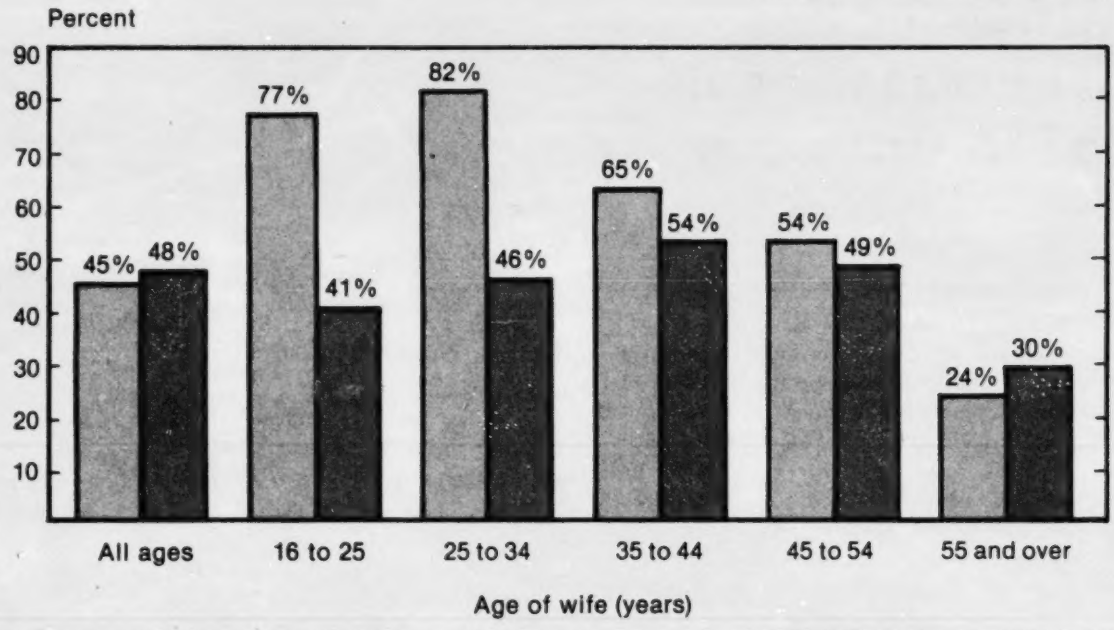
The differential between wives in and not in the labor force according to presence of children decreases among those 35 to 44 and 45 to 54. For wives age 55 and over, women with children were actually more likely to be labor force participants; wives in this age category, generally were not caring for infants or youngsters who were of an age likely to inhibit seeking work outside the home.

The age of the child is often a critical factor in determining whether the mother enters or remains in the labor force. The participation rate for wives whose only children at home were age 14 to 17 was about 57 percent, whereas the rate for those whose children were all under age 6 was only 40 percent (table 21).

Working Wives by Education and Income Level

Regardless of whether a wife has children or not, the more years of school she has completed, the more likely she is to

FIGURE 4.
Labor Force Participation Rates of Wives



be a member of the labor force. Among wives who were not high school graduates, only a third (33 percent) were working or job hunting, whereas two-thirds (69 percent) of those who had completed more than 4 years of college were in the labor force. If the wife had 4 or more years of college, was under age 45, and had no children under 18, her participation rate soared to about 90 percent (table 22).

Wives do not necessarily enter the work force in proportion to their degree of economic need. For example, married women in 1977 were most likely to be in the work force if their husbands had incomes of $10,000 to $14,999; they had a higher participation rate (54 percent) than the comparable group of women whose husbands had incomes of less than $3,000 (43 percent).

If one looks at married-couple families from the standpoint of their joint labor force participation, one finds that married couples with both spouses working or seeking work had a median family income of $19,327. If only the husband was in the labor force, the median family income was about $3,000 lower, or $16,267. If the situation was reversed, and only the wife was a member of the labor force, the median income was $12,450 (table 23).

If neither spouse was in the labor force, the median income was between $7,000 and $8,000. Undoubtedly, very few of these couples did not work because of independent wealth. Still about 10 percent of these nonworking couples did have incomes in excess of $20,000. Such couples were likely to be living on their fixed retirement incomes or the income of relatives who shared their living quarters.

Work Experience of Married Couples

Some married men and women are not successful in their efforts to find or keep a job, and many who do work may not wish or be able to hold a full-time position for the entire year. Although there are a substantial number of wives working and contributing to the family's income, the husband is still more likely to be found among the ranks of full-time, year-round workers (figure 5).

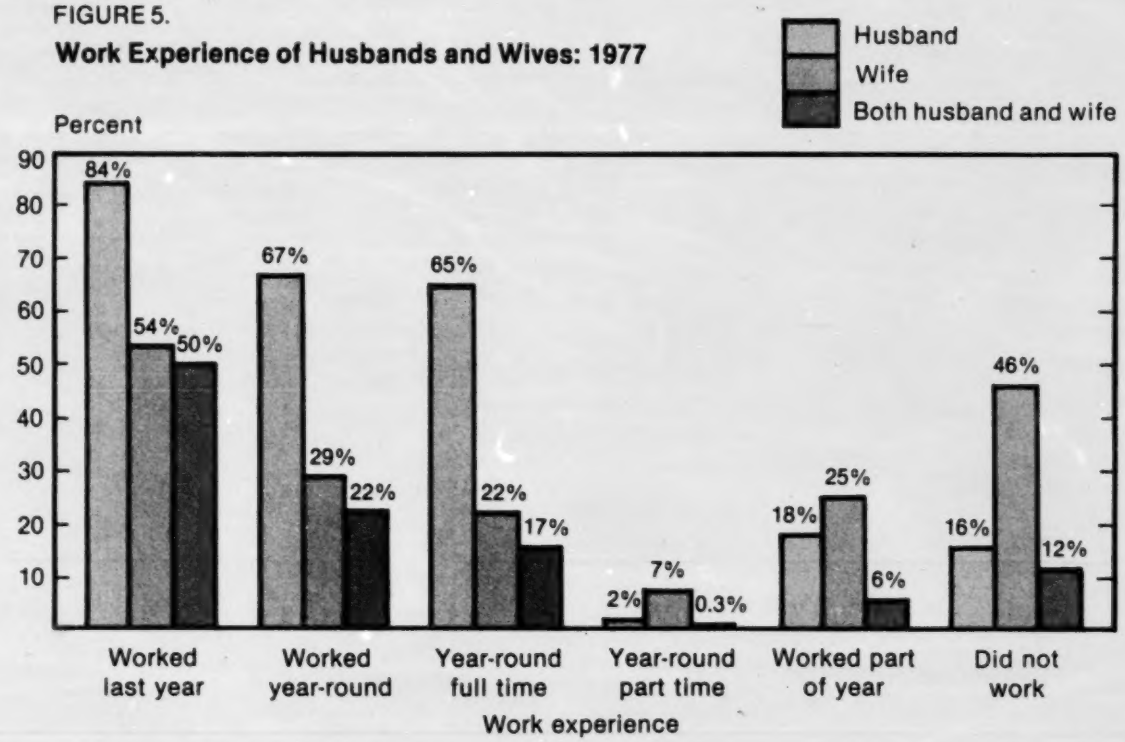
The March 1977 Current Population Survey indicated that 84 percent of all husbands worked for some period of time during 1976, 65 percent worked at full-time jobs all year, and only 2 percent held part-time jobs for the whole year. About 16 percent of married men did not work outside the home at all during 1976. By comparison, 54 percent of all wives worked sometime during the year, 23 percent were full-time workers all year, and 7 percent worked part-time all year. About 46 percent of married women did not work outside the home at all during the year (table 24).

In 1 of every 2 married couples (50 percent), both the husband and wife had some work experience during 1976, but only 17 percent of the couples held full-time jobs all year, and less than 1 percent of the couples worked only part-time all year. In 12 percent of all married couples, neither spouse had any work experience during the preceding year.

In nearly all (95 percent) of the married-couple families in which there were children under 18 years of age, the husband worked at least some part of the preceding year, and in

FIGURE 5.

Work Experience of Husbands and Wives: 1977



three-fourths (77 percent) he worked full time all year. The corresponding proportions of wives were substantial but much smaller (56 percent and 20 percent, respectively).

In future years it may become a more frequent occurrence for both spouses to work only part of the year, or for more of the husbands to devote themselves to childrearing in the home, or for both to work at part-time jobs. To the extent that such work patterns evolve, the end result would be a reduction in the husband's and father's role as the only economic provider. As a matter of fact, the 1977 data show that the husband was the family's *sole* earner in only 26 percent of the married-couple families (table 25). More common were couples in which there were 2 earners, the husband and wife (36 percent). The proportion of couples in which the wife was the only earner was quite low (4 percent).

Couples in which both spouses were earners tended to exhibit more mobility than those in which only one spouse was an earner. This situation may be in large part attributable to the fact that the age distribution among couples in which both spouses work is more youthful, and the link between youth and mobility is well established.

Couples in which both spouses were earners, in addition to having significantly higher family incomes, were more likely to have completed at least 1 year of college than couples in which either the husband or the wife was the only earner (table 26). Again, the age distribution of these couples plays an important role.

TABLE 19.

Labor Force Participation Rates of Husbands and Wives: March 1977

(Numbers in thousands)

Age	Husband		Wife	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All ages, 16 and over....	48,002	80.6	47,984	46.6
16 to 24 years.....	3,257	89.6	5,467	58.2
25 to 34 years.....	11,339	94.1	12,101	52.2
35 to 44 years.....	9,323	95.7	9,312	56.0
45 to 54 years.....	9,460	92.9	9,214	51.8
55 to 64 years.....	7,846	76.4	7,093	36.1
65 years and over.....	6,778	20.9	4,797	7.0

TABLE 20.

Labor Force Status and Participation Rates of Wives, by Age and Presence of Own Children: March 1977

(Numbers in thousands)

Presence of own children and age of wife	All wives	In labor force		Not in labor force		Labor force participation rate
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total wives[1]	47,984	22,377	100.0	25,607	100.0	46.6
16 to 24 years	5,467	3,181	14.2	2,286	8.9	58.2
25 to 34 years	12,101	6,315	28.2	5,787	22.6	52.2
35 to 44 years	9,312	5,212	23.3	4,100	16.0	56.0
45 to 54 years	9,214	4,773	21.3	4,440	17.3	51.8
55 years and over	11,890	2,896	12.9	8,994	35.1	24.4
Wives with no own children under 18 years[1]	22,886	10,268	45.9	12,618	49.3	44.9
16 to 24 years	2,584	1,988	8.9	596	2.3	76.9
25 to 34 years	2,139	1,744	7.8	395	1.5	81.5
35 to 44 years	1,420	915	4.1	505	2.0	64.5
45 to 54 years	5,384	2,883	12.9	2,501	9.8	53.5
55 years and over	11,359	2,738	12.2	8,621	33.7	24.1
Wives with own children under 18 years[1]	25,098	12,109	54.1	12,989	50.7	48.2
16 to 24 years	2,883	1,193	5.3	1,690	6.6	41.4
25 to 34 years	9,962	4,570	20.4	5,392	21.1	45.9
35 to 44 years	7,892	4,297	19.2	3,595	14.0	54.4
45 to 54 years	3,830	1,891	8.5	1,939	7.6	49.4
55 years and over	531	158	0.7	373	1.5	29.8

[1] Includes wives 16 years old and over.

TABLE 21.

Labor Force Status and Participation Rates of Wives, by Presence and Age of Own Children: March 1977

(Numbers in thousands)

Presence and age of own children	All wives	In labor force		Not in labor force		Labor force participation rate
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total[1]	47,984	22,377	100.0	25,607	100.0	46.6
None under 18 years	22,886	10,268	45.9	12,618	49.3	44.9
Some under 18 years	25,098	12,109	54.1	12,989	50.7	48.2
All 6 to 17 years	13,800	7,674	34.3	6,126	23.9	55.6
All 14 to 17 years	3,924	2,247	10.0	1,677	6.5	57.3
All 6 to 13 years	5,313	2,842	12.7	2,471	9.6	53.5
Some 6 to 13 years, some 14 to 17 years	4,563	2,584	11.5	1,979	7.7	56.6
Some 6 to 17 years, some under 6 years	5,217	1,989	8.9	3,228	12.6	38.1
All under 6 years	6,081	2,446	10.9	3,635	14.2	40.2
All 3 to 5 years	1,448	752	3.4	696	2.7	51.9
All under 3 years	3,053	1,210	5.4	1,844	7.2	39.6
Some 3 to 5 years, some under 3 years	1,580	485	2.2	1,096	4.3	30.7

[1] Includes wives age 16 years and over.

TABLE 22.

Labor Force Participation Rates of Wives, by Years of School Completed by Wife, Presence and Age of Own Children, and Income of Husband: March 1977

(Income during 1976. For meaning of symbols, see text)

Subject	Labor force participation rate					
		Years of school completed by wife				
				College		
	Total	Less than 4 years of high school	High school, 4 years	1 to 3 years	4 years	5 years or more
TOTAL						
All wives	46.6	33.4	50.1	52.1	56.3	68.5
No own children under 18 years	44.9	27.7	51.0	55.1	63.3	70.7
Wife under 45 years	75.6	54.4	75.7	79.4	90.1	89.6
Wife 45 years and over	33.6	23.8	41.0	37.9	38.2	53.5
With own children under 18 years	48.2	41.1	49.4	49.8	50.9	66.6
UNDER $3,000						
All wives	42.6	28.5	55.3	62.8	63.9	(B)
No own children under 18 years	37.9	24.1	52.4	60.5	61.5	(B)
Wife under 45 years	69.1	47.6	71.3	81.1	(B)	(B)
Wife 45 years and over	29.6	21.3	46.0	38.1	37.3	(B)
With own children under 18 years	52.0	39.6	59.5	66.9	68.7	(B)
$3,000 TO $4,999						
All wives	35.9	24.3	48.8	53.8	57.0	(B)
No own children under 18 years	29.7	18.8	42.9	49.3	53.2	(B)
Wife under 45 years	71.7	51.2	78.7	73.9	(B)	(B)
Wife 45 years and over	22.1	16.4	32.9	34.3	26.8	(B)
With own children under 18 years	51.2	40.7	59.5	67.1	65.8	(B)
$5,000 TO $9,999						
All wives	47.2	35.7	52.2	56.3	65.9	73.1
No own children under 18 years	43.6	28.8	51.1	56.6	64.0	69.2
Wife under 45 years	77.2	56.7	78.3	84.6	92.6	(B)
Wife 45 years and over	29.5	24.0	36.3	29.1	31.3	(B)
With own children under 18 years	51.5	44.6	53.4	56.0	68.8	80.8
$10,000 TO $14,999						
All wives	53.7	40.3	55.4	59.9	68.3	78.3
No own children under 18 years	55.6	38.2	58.7	64.7	72.6	79.4
Wife under 45 years	80.0	59.9	79.5	81.6	94.3	91.8
Wife 45 years and over	41.9	33.8	46.8	45.6	40.5	(B)
With own children under 18 years	52.2	42.1	53.2	56.2	64.4	76.6
$15,000 TO $19,999						
All wives	48.8	34.6	49.8	52.5	57.1	67.0
No own children under 18 years	51.3	31.1	52.6	57.9	73.1	74.3
Wife under 45 years	74.4	43.6	71.5	78.5	90.6	88.1
Wife 45 years and over	42.2	28.9	46.5	44.6	52.9	58.3
With own children under 18 years	47.3	37.5	48.3	49.9	47.4	61.8
$20,000 TO $24,999						
All wives	44.6	27.3	43.7	49.8	49.1	65.9
No own children under 18 years	44.7	24.2	42.6	51.9	61.2	71.8
Wife under 45 years	70.3	(B)	66.1	(B)	(B)	(B)
Wife 45 years and over	37.8	22.1	37.9	47.8	40.8	(B)
With own children under 18 years	44.6	30.1	44.4	48.8	43.5	62.3
$25,000 AND OVER						
All wives	36.6	28.3	33.9	33.3	39.1	59.6
No own children under 18 years	39.7	27.2	39.9	36.2	43.7	57.9
Wife under 45 years	65.4	(B)	57.1	(B)	(B)	(B)
Wife 45 years and over	34.0	18.3	36.5	31.3	34.9	49.5
With own children under 18 years	34.6	30.3	29.4	31.6	36.6	60.2

TABLE 23.

Joint Labor Force and Employment Status of Husbands and Wives, by Family Income: March 1977

(Income during 1976)

Family income	All married-couple families	In labor force			Neither spouse in labor force
		Husband and wife	Husband only	Wife only	
Total.....(thousands)..	47,497	20,034	18,274	2,136	7,054
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under $2,000.....	1.1	0.7	1.3	1.2	1.8
$2,000 to $4,999.....	5.3	1.6	3.6	6.1	19.9
$5,000 to $9,999.....	17.4	9.2	16.0	29.2	41.0
$10,000 to $14,999.....	20.6	18.2	23.4	27.7	18.0
$15,000 to $19,999.....	20.8	23.5	22.8	17.4	9.0
$20,000 to $24,999.....	14.5	19.5	13.5	8.8	4.7
$25,000 to $49,999.....	18.1	25.3	16.2	9.0	5.0
$50,000 and over.....	2.2	2.0	3.3	0.6	0.7
Median income.....(dollars)..	$16,013	$19,327	$16,267	$12,450	$7,610

TABLE 24.

Work Experience of Husband, by Work Experience of Wife and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years of Age: March 1977

(Numbers in thousands)

Work experience of wife	All married-couple families	Husband worked last year					Husband did not work
		Total	Full year			Part-year	
			Total	Full-time	Part-time		
Total[1]	46,687	39,407	31,134	30,223	911	8,273	7,280
Worked last year	25,147	23,398	18,540	18,065	475	4,858	1,749
Full-year	13,584	12,580	10,389	10,095	294	2,192	1,004
Full-time	10,498	9,723	7,898	7,726	171	1,826	774
Part-time	3,087	2,857	2,491	2,369	122	366	230
Did not work	21,540	16,009	12,594	12,158	436	3,415	5,531
With no related children under 18	21,782	15,688	11,780	11,128	652	3,908	6,093
Worked last year	11,117	9,867	7,496	7,175	321	2,371	1,249
Full-year	6,957	6,215	4,991	4,775	216	1,223	743
Full-time	5,624	5,063	4,015	3,894	121	1,049	561
Part-time	1,333	1,151	976	881	95	175	182
Did not work	10,665	5,821	4,284	3,953	331	1,537	4,844
With one or more related children under 18	24,905	23,719	19,354	19,095	259	4,365	1,187
Worked last year	14,030	13,531	11,044	10,890	154	2,486	499
Full-year	6,627	6,366	5,397	5,320	78	969	261
Full-time	4,873	4,660	3,883	3,832	51	777	213
Part-time	1,754	1,706	1,515	1,488	27	191	48
Did not work	10,875	10,188	8,310	8,205	104	1,878	688
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF MARRIED COUPLES, BY WORK EXPERIENCE OF HUSBAND							
Total	100.0	84.4	66.7	64.7	2.0	17.7	15.6
Worked last year	100.0	93.0	73.7	71.8	1.9	19.3	7.0
Full-year	100.0	92.6	76.5	74.3	2.2	16.1	7.4
Full-time	100.0	92.6	75.2	73.6	1.6	17.4	7.4
Part-time	100.0	92.5	80.7	76.7	4.0	11.9	7.5
Did not work	100.0	74.3	58.5	56.4	2.0	15.9	25.7
With no related children under 18	100.0	72.0	54.1	51.1	3.0	17.9	28.0
Worked last year	100.0	88.8	67.4	64.5	2.9	21.3	11.2
Full-year	100.0	89.3	71.7	68.6	3.1	17.6	10.7
Full-time	100.0	90.0	71.4	69.2	2.2	18.7	10.0
Part-time	100.0	86.3	73.2	66.1	7.1	13.1	13.7
Did not work	100.0	54.6	40.2	37.1	3.1	14.4	45.4
With one or more related children under 18	100.0	95.2	77.7	76.7	1.0	17.5	4.8
Worked last year	100.0	96.4	78.7	77.6	1.1	17.7	3.6
Full-year	100.0	96.1	81.4	80.3	1.2	14.6	3.9
Full-time	100.0	95.6	79.7	78.6	1.0	15.9	4.4
Part-time	100.0	97.3	86.4	84.8	1.5	10.9	2.7
Did not work	100.0	93.7	76.4	75.4	1.0	17.3	6.3
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF MARRIED COUPLES, BY WORK EXPERIENCE OF WIFE							
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Worked last year	53.9	59.4	59.5	59.8	52.1	58.7	24.0
Full-year	29.1	31.9	33.4	33.4	32.3	26.5	13.8
Full-time	22.5	24.7	25.4	25.6	18.8	22.1	10.6
Part-time	6.6	7.2	8.0	7.8	13.4	4.4	3.2
Did not work	46.1	40.6	40.5	40.2	47.9	41.3	76.0
With no related children under 18	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Worked last year	51.0	62.9	63.6	64.5	49.2	60.7	20.5
Full-year	31.9	39.6	42.4	42.9	33.1	31.3	12.2
Full-time	25.8	32.3	34.1	35.0	18.6	26.8	9.2
Part-time	6.1	7.3	8.3	7.9	14.6	4.5	3.0
Did not work	49.0	37.1	36.4	35.5	50.8	39.3	79.5
With one or more related children under 18	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Worked last year	56.3	57.0	57.1	57.0	59.5	57.0	42.0
Full-year	26.6	26.8	27.9	27.9	30.1	22.2	22.0
Full-time	19.6	19.6	20.1	20.1	19.7	17.8	17.9
Part-time	7.0	7.2	7.8	7.8	10.4	4.4	4.0
Did not work	43.7	43.0	43.0	43.0	40.2	43.0	58.0

[1]Excludes noncivilian families.

TABLE 25.

Earning Status of Husbands and Wives, by Mobility and Age: March 1977

Subject	All married-couple families	Husband and wife only earners	Husband only earner	Wife only earner
Total[1] ..... (thousands) ..	47,497	17,278	12,204	1,699
Percent	100.0	36.4	25.7	3.6
MOBILITY				
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Nonmovers	73.9	62.7	73.4	70.0
Movers	26.1	37.3	26.6	30.0
Same county	14.9	22.8	14.6	11.1
Same State	5.6	8.3	6.1	3.6
Different State	4.7	5.6	4.8	10.0
Other	1.0	0.6	1.0	5.2
AGE OF SPOUSES				
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both 14 to 24 years	5.9	10.8	5.1	8.6
Husband only	0.6	1.1	0.6	1.0
Both 25 to 34 years	17.8	28.1	24.9	12.5
Husband only	5.7	9.6	6.2	4.7
Both 35 to 44 years	12.3	10.5	10.5	4.8
Husband only	7.2	9.6	9.6	4.1
Both 45 to 54 years	12.2	9.1	8.8	5.8
Husband only	7.6	5.5	6.4	3.2
Both 55 to 64 years	9.3	7.3	11.7	12.3
Husband only	7.1	4.9	7.3	10.0
Both 65 years and over	9.1	1.1	5.8	11.2
Husband only	5.0	2.4	3.0	21.7

[1]Includes 16,307,000 families not shown separately.

TABLE 26.

Earning Status of Husbands and Wives, by Selected Characteristics: March 1977

Subject	All married-couple families	Husband and wife only earners	Husband only earner	Wife only earner
Total[1].....(thousands)..	47,497	17,278	12,204	1,699
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
RESIDENCE				
Metropolitan.....	65.8	65.6	67.2	62.4
Nonmetropolitan.....	34.2	34.4	32.8	37.6
SCHOOL COMPLETED BY BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE				
Less than 4 years of high school.	21.9	13.9	22.2	26.5
High school, 4 years.....	24.2	27.3	24.4	20.6
College, 1 to 3 years.....	4.6	6.3	4.3	3.4
College, 4 years or more.....	2.2	3.4	1.6	1.5
FAMILY INCOME				
Under $2,000.....	1.1	0.8	1.3	2.1
$2,000 to $4,999.....	5.3	2.0	4.6	8.3
$5,000 to $9,999.....	17.4	11.8	20.4	37.5
$10,000 to $14,999.....	20.6	21.8	26.1	27.6
$15,000 to $19,999.....	20.8	25.6	22.9	15.3
$20,000 to $24,999.....	14.5	18.3	11.2	5.1
$25,000 to $49,999.....	18.1	18.3	11.2	3.8
$50,000 and over.....	2.2	1.4	2.4	0.4
Median income.....(dollars)..	$16,013	$17,151	$14,348	$10,227

[1]Includes 16,307,000 families not shown separately.

Income of Married Couples

The median family income for all married-couple families in 1976 was about $16,271 (table 27). As one would expect, the presence of more than one earner in the family was associated with a relatively high median family income. Also as expected, the lowest median income ($6,761) was that for families with no earners at all. The median income for families with the husband as the only earner was $14,543, as compared with medians of $17,570 for those with two earners (the husband and wife), and $20,203 for those with the husband and some other relative as the earners. In families with at least three earners (one of which was the husband), the median income was $23,474.

For White married-couple families the median income was $16,554; in comparison, Black couples had a median income of $13,280, and Spanish-origin couples, $11,969.

About 20 percent of all married-couple families had incomes of $25,000 or more in 1976. An additional 36 percent had incomes of at least $15,000 but less than $25,000, and, similarly, 38 percent had incomes of at least $5,000 but less than $15,000. Finally, 6 percent had incomes of less than $5,000. (The 1976 poverty threshold for a nonfarm family of four, according to Federal government guidelines, was $5,815.)

Income of Husbands and Wives

The personal income of husbands was about $2,000 higher among those men whose wives did not contribute to family income than among those men whose wives did contribute. The median income for all husbands in married-couple families was $12,307 (table 28A). If both the husband and wife were income recipients, the median income of the husband was $11,609, whereas the median income of the husband was $13,751 if the wife was not a contributor to the family's income.

The median personal income was much lower for wives than for husbands (table 28B). Overall, married women with income had a median income of only $3,900. If both spouses were income recipients, wives had a median income of $3,888, compared to a median of $5,153 for wives whose husbands had no income in 1976—a difference of about $1,300.

Earnings of Husbands and Wives

Although all persons with earnings have income, not all with income have earnings. Wages, salaries, and self-employment income are identified as earnings and generally constitute the major source of income. Some persons, however, receive all of their income in the form of "unearned income" (pensions, public assistance, interest, and other sources).

Whereas 99 percent of husbands had incomes in 1976, only 85 percent had earnings. Husbands had median earnings of $12,933, and about 56 percent earned $10,000 or more during the course of the year (table 29).

The gap between the proportion receiving income and the proportion with earnings was about the same for wives as for husbands. About 65 percent of wives had incomes in 1976, but only 52 percent had any earnings during the period. Among wives with earnings, the median was $4,778, and just 8 percent earned $10,000 or more. Thus, median earnings for husbands were about 171 percent higher than median earnings for wives ($12,933 versus $4,778).

Although most husbands have higher earnings than their wives, a significant number of wives in 1976 were in at least as high an earnings category as their husbands. From the data in table 29 it can be demonstrated that, in approximately 1 of every 3 *married couples in which the wife had earnings,* her earnings were in the same class interval as that of her husband or in a higher interval. But about one-half of the wives had no earnings at all; therefore, among close to 1 in every 6 of *all married couples,* the wife had earnings comparable to, or more than, those of her husband.

Characteristics of Earner Couples

The median age of wives among couples with both spouses as earners was 36.8 years (table 30A), and the comparable figure for husbands was 39.9 years (table 30B). About 42 percent of such couples had no children under 18 years of age.

About 16 percent of the wives among dual-earner couples had completed 4 years of college or more. The corresponding proportion among the husbands was 21 percent. Moreover, among such couples, the majority of the wives held pro-

fessional, clerical, sales, and other white-collar positions (65 percent). Among their husbands, about equal proportions were holding white-collar positions (45 percent) and blue-collar jobs (46 percent).

Thus, the picture that emerges of these dual-earner couples is that they tend to be somewhat younger but less likely to have no children in the home, and they tend to be better educated than husbands and wives in general.

TABLE 27.

Total Money Income of Married-Couple Families, by Number of Earners and Race and Spanish Origin of Husband: March 1977

(For meaning of symbols, see text)

Race and number of earners	Total		Total money income (1976)								Median income (dollars)
	Number (thousands)	Percent	Under $2,000	$2,000 to $4,999	$5,000 to $9,999	$10,000 to $14,999	$15,000 to $19,999	$20,000 to $24,999	$25,000 to $49,999	$50,000 or more	
ALL RACES											
All married-couple families[1]	46,687	100.0	1.1	5.3	17.1	20.6	20.9	14.6	18.2	2.2	$16,271
Husband an earner:											
All married-couple families	39,407	100.0	0.9	2.6	12.7	20.8	23.1	16.5	20.8	2.6	17,656
1 earner	12,198	100.0	1.3	4.6	20.4	26.1	22.9	11.2	11.2	2.4	14,543
2 earners	19,770	100.0	0.8	2.0	11.2	21.3	25.0	18.4	19.3	2.0	17,845
Husband and wife only	17,270	100.0	0.8	2.1	11.8	21.8	25.6	18.2	18.3	1.4	17,570
Husband and other relative only	2,501	100.0	1.0	1.6	7.1	17.9	21.2	19.2	26.4	5.5	20,203
3 or more earners	7,439	100.0	0.6	1.1	4.3	10.6	18.2	20.2	40.6	4.5	23,474
Husband not an earner:											
All married-couple families	7,280	100.0	2.2	19.9	40.5	19.4	9.1	4.2	4.2	0.5	8,028
No earner	4,866	100.0	2.4	26.3	44.8	16.2	5.5	2.2	2.2	0.4	6,761
1 earner	1,810	100.0	2.2	8.8	36.1	26.1	15.4	6.2	5.2	0.2	10,443
Wife only	1,324	100.0	2.6	10.1	37.8	27.7	13.7	4.4	3.3	0.2	9,902
Other relative only	486	100.0	0.8	4.9	31.1	21.2	19.8	11.3	10.7	-	12,715
2 or more earners	604	100.0	0.3	1.7	19.2	26.3	19.4	14.4	16.9	1.8	15,680
WHITE											
All married-couple families	42,719	100.0	1.1	4.9	16.6	20.3	21.0	14.9	18.8	2.4	16,554
Husband an earner:											
All married-couple families	36,117	100.0	0.9	2.4	12.2	20.5	23.2	16.8	21.5	2.7	17,911
1 earner	11,359	100.0	1.2	4.0	19.4	26.1	23.3	11.7	11.8	2.6	14,860
2 earners	17,923	100.0	0.8	1.8	10.7	21.0	25.3	18.7	19.8	2.1	18,040
Husband and wife only	15,587	100.0	0.7	1.9	11.3	21.6	25.8	18.5	18.6	1.5	17,728
Husband and other relative only	2,336	100.0	0.9	1.3	6.3	17.1	21.5	19.7	27.4	5.8	20,544
3 earners or more	6,836	100.0	0.6	1.0	4.0	9.7	17.6	20.4	42.1	4.6	23,972
Husband not an earner:											
All married-couple families	6,601	100.0	2.2	18.6	40.9	19.8	9.3	4.3	4.4	0.5	8,209
No earner	4,536	100.0	2.4	24.6	45.4	17.0	5.6	2.4	2.4	0.4	6,944
1 earner	1,564	100.0	2.4	7.1	35.0	26.4	16.7	6.5	5.8	0.2	10,757
Wife only	1,149	100.0	3.0	8.1	37.8	28.3	14.6	4.4	3.5	0.3	10,121
Other relative only	415	100.0	0.7	4.3	27.7	20.7	22.2	12.3	12.5	-	13,977
2 earners or more	500	100.0	0.4	1.0	18.2	24.6	20.6	14.4	18.6	2.2	16,455
BLACK											
All married-couple families	3,302	100.0	1.6	10.4	23.4	23.3	19.4	11.1	10.4	0.5	13,280
Husband an earner:											
All married-couple families	2,711	100.0	1.6	5.4	20.1	24.9	22.4	12.7	12.3	0.6	14,634
1 earner	692	100.0	3.0	11.7	34.8	27.6	16.8	2.3	3.0	0.4	10,044
2 earners	1,548	100.0	1.2	3.8	17.2	24.5	23.4	15.4	14.0	0.4	15,645
Husband and wife only	1,416	100.0	1.0	3.5	16.9	24.4	23.9	16.0	14.2	0.3	15,785
Husband and other relative only	132	100.0	3.0	6.1	20.5	28.0	18.9	9.8	12.1	1.5	13,894
3 earners or more	471	100.0	0.8	1.7	8.1	21.7	27.2	18.7	20.4	1.7	18,022
Husband not an earner:											
All married-couple families	591	100.0	1.7	33.7	38.4	15.9	5.4	3.7	1.4	-	6,193
No earner	285	100.0	3.2	52.6	36.5	4.9	2.8	-	-	-	4,643
1 earner	219	100.0	0.5	20.1	44.3	22.8	5.5	5.0	0.9	-	7,665
Wife only	158	100.0	-	24.7	39.9	23.4	7.0	4.4	1.3	-	7,599
Other relative only	61	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
2 earners or more	87	100.0	-	4.6	28.7	33.3	13.8	12.6	6.9	-	12,088
SPANISH ORIGIN[2]											
All married-couple families	1,946	100.0	2.1	9.5	27.9	24.2	18.5	9.5	8.0	0.5	11,969
Husband an earner:											
All married-couple families	1,708	100.0	1.6	6.1	26.1	26.2	20.2	10.4	9.0	0.6	12,871
1 earner	658	100.0	2.3	10.3	38.0	26.4	16.0	3.8	2.7	0.6	9,927
2 earners	763	100.0	1.0	4.3	20.7	27.7	23.9	13.6	8.7	0.3	14,235
Husband and wife only	666	100.0	0.6	4.1	21.0	29.0	23.6	13.7	8.1	0.3	14,096
Husband and other relative only	97	100.0	5.2	5.2	18.6	20.6	23.7	13.4	12.4	-	15,229
3 earners or more	287	100.0	1.7	1.4	13.2	21.3	20.6	16.7	23.7	1.4	18.169
Husband not an earner:											
All married-couple families	238	100.0	5.5	33.6	42.0	10.1	5.9	2.9	1.3	-	5,842
No earner	151	100.0	7.9	44.4	41.1	4.6	2.0	0.7	-	-	4,382
1 earner	58	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Wife only	35	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Other relative only	23	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
2 earners or more	29	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)

[1]Excludes noncivilian families. [2]Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

TABLE 28A.

Income of Husbands, by Income Recipiency of their Wives: March 1977

(Income during 1976)

Income of husband	All husbands	Wife with income	Wife without income
Total.....(thousands)..	47,497	31,071	16,427
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0
Without income.....	1.0	1.0	1.0
Under $1,000.....	0.8	0.8	0.8
$1,000 to $1,999.....	1.6	1.9	0.8
$2,000 to $2,999.....	2.8	3.4	1.8
$3,000 to $3,999.....	4.2	4.8	2.9
$4,000 to $4,999.....	4.3	4.7	3.4
$5,000 to $5,999.....	4.6	4.8	4.2
$6,000 to $6,999.....	4.7	4.9	4.2
$7,000 to $7,999.....	4.8	5.0	4.3
$8,000 to $8,999.....	5.0	5.4	4.2
$9,000 to $9,999.....	4.9	5.0	4.6
$10,000 to $14,999.....	25.1	25.6	24.1
$15,000 and over.....	36.4	32.6	43.6
Median income of those with income.....(dollars)..	$12,307	$11,609	$13,751

TABLE 28B.

Income of Wives, by Income Recipiency of their Husbands: March 1977

(Income during 1976)

Income of wife	All wives	Husband with income	Husband without income
Total.....(thousands)..	47,497	47,035	463
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0
Without income.....	34.6	34.6	36.1
Under $1,000.....	10.5	10.6	7.1
$1,000 to $1,999.....	10.3	10.3	8.0
$2,000 to $2,999.....	6.8	6.8	5.8
$3,000 to $3,999.....	5.7	5.7	4.5
$4,000 to $4,999.....	4.9	4.9	5.4
$5,000 to $5,999.....	4.9	4.8	7.3
$6,000 to $6,999.....	4.4	4.4	2.6
$7,000 to $7,999.....	3.8	3.8	5.2
$8,000 to $8,999.....	3.4	3.4	6.7
$9,000 to $9,999.....	2.4	2.4	1.5
$10,000 to $14,999.....	6.3	6.3	7.8
$15,000 and over.....	2.0	2.0	2.2
Median income of those with income.....(dollars)..	$3,900	$3,888	$5,153

TABLE 29.

Earnings of Wife, by Earnings of Husband: March 1977

(Numbers in thousands. For meaning of symbols, see text)

Earnings of husband (1976)	Total married-couple families	Earnings of wife (1976)						Median earnings (dollars)
		Total with earnings	Under $2,000	$2,000 to $4,999	$5,000 to $9,999	$10,000 to $14,999	$15,000 and over	
Total	47,497	24,758	6,457	6,395	8,299	2,830	777	$4,778
Without earnings	7,034	1,700	434	490	530	197	49	4,547
With earnings	40,463	23,058	6,023	5,904	7,767	2,633	728	4,798
Under $2,000	2,131	997	301	274	294	102	27	4,162
$2,000 to $4,999	2,961	1,735	506	593	471	128	39	3,829
$5,000 to $9,999	8,633	5,425	1,400	1,530	2,058	378	58	4,574
$10,000 to $14,999	11,092	6,879	1,563	1,704	2,536	924	151	5,340
$15,000 and over	15,646	8,023	2,253	1,805	2,411	1,102	455	4,923
Median earnings (dollars)	$12,933	$12,451	$12,574	$11,629	$12,091	$13,834	+$15,000	...
Percent distribution of husbands	100.0	52.1	13.6	13.5	17.5	6.0	1.6	...
Without earnings	100.0	24.2	6.2	7.0	7.5	2.8	0.7	...
With earnings	100.0	57.0	14.9	14.6	19.2	6.5	1.8	...
Under $2,000	100.0	46.8	14.1	12.9	13.8	4.8	1.3	...
$2,000 to $4,999	100.0	58.6	17.1	20.0	15.9	4.3	1.3	...
$5,000 to $9,999	100.0	62.8	16.2	17.7	23.8	4.4	0.7	...
$10,000 to $14,999	100.0	62.0	14.1	15.4	22.9	8.3	1.4	...
$15,000 and over	100.0	51.3	14.4	11.5	15.4	7.0	2.9	...
Percent distribution of wives	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	...
Earnings of husband:								
Without earnings	14.8	6.9	6.7	7.7	6.4	7.0	6.3	...
With earnings	85.2	93.1	93.3	92.3	93.6	93.0	93.7	...
Under $2,000	4.5	4.0	4.7	4.3	3.5	3.6	3.5	...
$2,000 to $4,999	6.2	7.0	7.8	9.3	5.7	4.5	5.0	...
$5,000 to $9,999	18.2	21.9	21.7	23.9	24.8	13.4	7.5	...
$10,000 to $14,000	23.4	27.8	24.2	26.6	30.6	32.7	19.4	...
$15,000 and over	32.9	32.4	34.9	28.2	29.1	38.9	58.6	...

TABLE 30A.

Family Characteristics, by Earnings of Husband in Married-Couple Families in which Both Husband and Wife Had Earnings During 1976: March 1977

(For meaning of symbols, see text)

Subject	Earnings of husband (1976)								
	Total	Under $2,000	$2,000 to $4,999	$5,000 to $9,999	$10,000 to $14,999	$15,000 to $19,999	$20,000 to $24,999	$25,000 and over	Median earnings (dollars)
AGE OF WIFE									
Total.....(thousands)..	22,443	947	1,686	5,163	6,763	4,482	1,868	1,532	$12,363
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
14 to 24 years.....	15.4	18.4	27.4	27.7	14.5	7.3	2.8	2.3	8,851
25 to 34 years.....	30.3	21.2	22.5	28.7	35.7	31.9	29.6	24.1	12,640
35 to 44 years.....	23.2	11.3	13.7	17.6	22.2	29.6	33.6	33.2	14,414
45 to 54 years.....	20.4	19.1	16.4	16.3	18.9	23.3	26.2	30.3	13,630
55 to 64 years.....	9.7	23.2	16.1	9.1	8.4	7.5	8.3	9.7	10,952
65 years and over.....	1.0	6.9	3.9	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4	2,718
Median age.....	36.8	44.2	35.0	32.8	34.9	38.7	40.5	42.1	...
NUMBER OF RELATED CHILDREN UNDER 18									
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	12,363
No children.....	42.1	59.6	55.0	45.1	41.7	35.5	33.2	38.7	11,390
1 child.....	22.0	21.2	19.8	23.2	22.5	22.0	20.3	21.5	12,254
2 children.....	21.3	11.2	12.6	17.7	21.9	26.4	27.5	23.5	13,709
3 children.....	9.3	5.1	7.2	7.9	8.9	11.1	12.7	11.0	13,701
4 or more children.....	5.3	3.1	5.3	6.2	5.0	5.0	6.4	5.2	12,228
OCCUPATION OF WIFE									
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	12,363
White collar workers.....	64.7	52.8	50.4	51.8	65.7	72.2	78.9	87.1	13,426
Blue collar workers.....	15.5	20.1	19.0	23.2	15.4	11.5	8.4	4.2	10,109
Farm workers.....	1.1	2.9	3.1	1.4	0.8	0.5	0.8	0.3	8,139
Service workers.....	18.7	24.4	27.6	23.6	18.1	15.8	12.0	8.4	10,605
YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY WIFE									
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	12,363
Elementary: Less than 8 years.....	3.0	6.3	7.8	5.3	2.1	1.1	0.7	0.1	7,469
8 years.....	3.9	8.3	7.2	5.6	3.8	2.2	1.1	0.7	9,166
High school: 1 to 3 years.....	13.3	16.3	18.4	19.1	13.5	9.8	7.1	3.0	10,157
4 years.....	48.4	40.3	42.3	47.2	51.4	53.9	46.9	37.2	12,529
College: 1 to 3 years.....	15.9	16.6	13.9	12.7	15.8	15.8	20.8	23.2	13,257
4 years or more.....	15.5	12.4	10.5	10.1	13.4	17.4	23.4	35.8	15,096
4 years.....	10.3	8.0	7.4	7.4	9.4	11.0	14.1	21.9	14,411
5 years or more.....	5.2	4.3	3.1	2.8	3.9	6.4	9.4	14.0	16,104

TABLE 30B.

Family Characteristics, by Earnings of Wife in Married-Couple Families in which Both Husband and Wife Had Earnings During 1976: March 1977

(For meaning of symbols, see text)

Subject	Earnings of wife (1976)								Median earnings
	Total	Under $2,000	$2,000 to $4,999	$5,000 to $9,999	$10,000 to $14,999	$15,000 to $19,999	$20,000 to $24,999	$25,000 and over	(dollars)
AGE OF HUSBAND									
Total.....(thousands)..	22,443	5,730	5,763	7,639	2,595	576	76	64	$4,852
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	(B)	
14 to 24 years.....	9.3	11.4	10.7	9.6	3.4	0.5	-	(B)	3,842
25 to 34 years.....	29.4	29.8	27.9	30.7	30.3	20.0	21.1	(B)	4,953
35 to 44 years.....	23.1	26.0	22.7	21.3	22.9	21.7	31.6	(B)	4,521
45 to 54 years.....	22.3	18.7	23.1	22.1	26.6	31.6	23.7	(B)	5,216
55 to 64 years.....	13.1	10.9	12.4	14.0	14.3	21.9	22.4	(B)	5,501
65 years and over.....	2.8	3.2	3.2	22.8	.2.5	4.2	1.3	(B)	3,801
Median age.....	39.9	38.4	40.0	39.6	42.1	47.5	44.2	(B)	...
NUMBER OF RELATED CHILDREN UNDER 18									
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	(B)	4,852
No children.....	42.1	29.7	38.9	48.7	51.3	63.4	65.8	(B)	5,883
1 child.....	22.0	22.7	22.4	21.7	22.4	15.6	14.5	(B)	4,690
2 children.....	21.3	27.0	22.1	18.1	18.0	14.4	15.8	(B)	3,871
3 children.....	9.3	12.7	10.5	7.5	5.6	4.2	2.6	(B)	3,374
4 or more children.....	5.3	7.9	6.1	4.0	2.7	2.6	2.6	(B)	3,157
OCCUPATION OF HUSBAND									
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	(B)	4,852
White collar workers.....	44.7	41.0	39.4	43.5	60.2	70.1	85.5	(B)	5,548
Blue collar workers.....	45.6	47.7	50.5	47.0	32.1	24.3	10.5	(B)	4,436
Farm workers.....	3.0	5.1	3.0	2.1	1.5	1.6	1.3	(B)	2,774
Service workers.....	6.7	6.1	7.1	7.3	6.2	4.0	2.6	(B)	4,936
YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY HUSBAND									
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	(B)	4,852
Elementary: Less than 8 years.....	5.5	6.8	7.3	4.9	2.0	1.2	1.3	(B)	3,364
8 years.....	5.7	5.9	6.8	5.8	3.4	1.9	9.2	(B)	4,336
High school: 1 to 3 years.....	13.7	14.2	15.7	14.2	9.5	4.9	-	(B)	4,408
4 years.....	36.8	37.2	37.5	38.5	32.8	27.1	14.5	(B)	4,758
College: 1 to 3 years.....	17.0	15.5	15.9	18.2	18.5	22.2	19.7	(B)	5,353
4 years or more.....	21.2	20.4	16.8	18.5	33.9	42.5	56.6	(B)	5,907
4 years.....	11.6	11.3	9.4	10.9	17.2	19.3	13.2	(B)	5,722
5 years or more.....	9.6	9.1	7.4	7.7	16.6	23.4	44.7	(B)	6,148

Occupations of Husbands and Wives

The largest differences between the occupational distributions of employed husbands and wives were found among professional, managerial, clerical, craft, and service workers (figure 6). For example, whereas 17 percent of employed husbands were in the managerial category and 23 percent were craft workers (carpenters, mechanics, etc.), the corresponding proportions for employed wives were 6 percent and 2 percent, respectively. By contrast, high concentrations of employed wives were found in clerical (36 percent) or service positions (18 percent). The comparable proportion of husbands in these categories was only 6 percent and 7 percent, respectively. Perhaps it should be noted that the service category includes not only work in private households, but also a wide range of food, health, custodial, and protective services.

Men with employed wives (table 31) were somewhat more likely to do white-collar work (47 percent) than men whose wives were not gainfully employed outside the home (42 percent). The men whose wives are employed are more likely than others to have married women with a high school diploma or a college degree which made them more employable. Despite the differences in the occupational distributions of husbands and wives, many dual-career couples have similar occupations. In nearly 1 of every 5 married couples, both the husband and wife were in the same occupational group. For instance, about 35 percent of the married women working in professional positions and 30 percent of those in managerial occupations had a husband employed in the same respective category. Among the small number of women employed as farm workers, two-thirds had a husband who also worked on a farm (table 32).

FIGURE 6.

Occupational Distribution of Husbands and Wives: March 1977

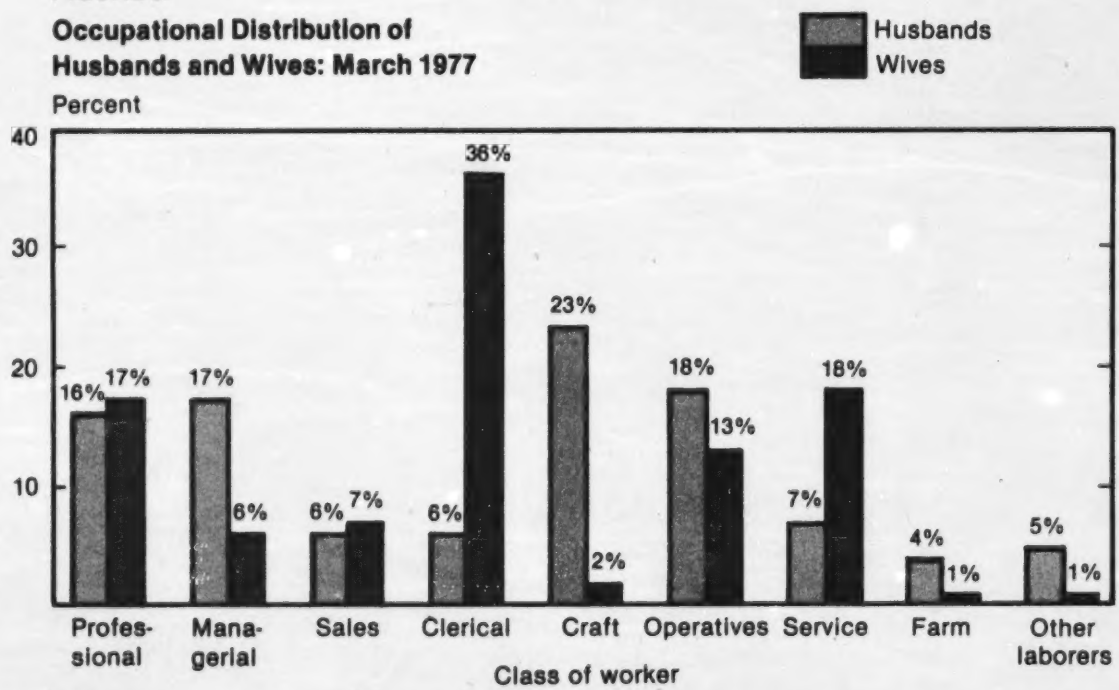


TABLE 31.

Occupation Group of Employed Husbands, by Employment Status of Wives: March 1977

Occupation of husband	All employed husbands	Employed husbands with employed wives	Other
Total[1] ..... (thousands)..	36,987	18,122	18,865
Percent, total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Professional, technical, and kindred workers...	15.8	16.8	14.9
Managers and administrators, except farm.....	17.0	17.7	16.4
Sales workers	6.2	6.7	5.8
Clerical and kindred workers	5.6	6.1	5.2
Craft and kindred workers	22.6	21.4	23.7
Operatives	17.6	17.4	17.8
Service workers	6.6	6.6	6.5
Farm workers	3.9	2.9	4.8
Other laborers	4.7	4.5	4.9

[1]Excludes husbands under 16 years old.

TABLE 32.

Occupational Distribution of Employed Wives, by Employment Status and Occupation Group of Husbands: March 1977

(For meaning of symbols, see text)

Employment status and occupation group of husband	All married-couple families with employed wives	Occupation group of wife								
		Professional, technical and kindred	Managers and administrators, except farm	Sales workers	Clerical and kindred workers	Craft and kindred workers	Operatives	Service workers	Farm workers	Other laborers
Total ..... (thousands)..	20,854	3,566	1,260	1,346	7,395	341	2,698	3,818	236	193
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
In labor force	91.6	93.7	89.0	91.4	94.3	91.2	88.7	87.4	92.8	91.2
Employed	86.9	90.1	86.5	87.1	89.4	87.4	82.8	81.8	91.5	86.5
Professional, technical and kindred.....	14.6	34.5	16.2	13.4	14.1	8.8	3.4	6.5	3.8	3.6
Managers and administrators, except farm...	15.4	19.7	30.2	19.6	17.7	11.4	6.1	8.7	3.0	6.7
Sales workers	5.8	6.3	7.9	10.7	7.6	6.2	1.6	2.9	1.7	1.0
Clerical and kindred workers	5.3	4.9	4.7	4.3	6.8	3.5	3.9	4.8	0.8	1.6
Craft and kindred workers	18.6	10.3	13.1	19.7	20.8	22.3	23.4	20.1	5.9	26.9
Operatives	15.1	7.0	7.0	10.7	13.0	22.0	29.7	20.0	5.1	29.0
Service workers	5.7	4.0	4.0	3.7	5.1	5.3	5.8	10.1	2.5	3.6
Farm workers	2.5	1.7	1.5	1.9	1.2	2.1	2.4	2.6	65.7	1.0
Other laborers	3.9	1.7	1.7	3.2	3.1	5.6	6.5	6.3	2.1	12.4
Unemployed	3.5	2.4	2.0	1.9	3.6	3.8	5.2	4.5	0.8	3.6
Armed Forces	1.2	1.2	0.6	2.5	1.3	-	0.8	1.1	-	1.0
Not in labor force	8.4	6.3	11.0	8.6	5.7	8.8	11.3	12.6	7.2	8.8

Source and Reliability of the Estimates

Source of Data

Most of the estimates in this report are based on data obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS) of the Bureau of the Census. Some data, as footnoted in the tables, were obtained from the 1970 Census of Population. Brief descriptions of the sources from and procedures by which data were obtained are presented below.

Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS estimates in this report are based on data obtained annually in March of 1970 through 1977. The monthly CPS deals mainly with labor force data for the civilian noninstitutional population. Questions relating to labor force participation are asked about each member 14 years old and older in each sample household. In addition, supplementary questions are asked each March about household and family characteristics. In order to obtain more reliable data for the Spanish origin population, the March CPS sample was enlarged to include all households from the November 1976 sample which contained at least one person of Spanish origin.

The present CPS sample was initially selected from the 1970 census file and is updated continuously to reflect new construction where possible (see section, "Nonsampling Variability," below). The monthly CPS sample is spread over 461 areas with coverage in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia. A supplementary sample of housing units in 24 States and the District of Columbia was incorporated with the monthly CPS sample to produce the March 1977 household and family data. The expanded CPS sample is located in 614 areas comprising 1,113 counties, independent cities, and divisions in the nation. The 614 sample areas used in March include 461 areas from the monthly CPS and 153 supplementary areas.

Samples for previous sample designs were selected from files from the most recently completed census. The following table provides a description of some aspects of the CPS sample designs in use during the referenced data collection periods.

Description of the Current Population Survey

Time period	Number of sample areas[1]	Households eligible		Housing units visited, not eligible[2]
		Interviewed	Not interviewed	
Supplemental sample.....	153	8,500	500	1,500
August 1972 to present.....	461	45,000	2,000	8,000
August 1971 to July 1972.....	449	45,000	2,000	8,000
January 1967 to July 1971.....	449	48,000	2,000	8,500

[1]These areas were chosen to provide coverage in each State and the District of Columbia with the exception of the supplemental sample used for March 1977 data.

[2]These are housing units which were visited, but were found to be vacant or otherwise not eligible for interview.

The estimating procedure used for the monthly CPS data involves the inflation of weighted sample results to independent estimates of the civilian noninstitutional population of the United States by age, race, and sex. These independent estimates were based on statistics from decennial censuses; statistics on births, deaths, immigration, and emigration; and statistics on the strength of the Armed Forces. For this report, persons in the Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post were also included. The estimation procedure for the data in the report also involved a further adjustment so that husband and wife of a household received the same weight.

Decennial Census of Population. Decennial census data for 1970 in this report, as footnoted, are based on a 5-percent sample. Descriptions of the samples can be found in the appropriate census publications.

Reliability of the Estimates

Since the CPS estimates in this report were based on a sample, they may differ somewhat from the figures that would have been obtained if a complete census had been taken using the same schedules, instructions, and enumerators. There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. The standard errors provided for this report primarily indicate the magnitude of the sampling errors. They also partially measure the effect of some nonsampling errors in response and enumeration, but do not measure any systematic biases in the data. The full extent of the nonsampling error is unknown. Consequently, particular care should be exercised in the interpretation of figures based on a relatively small number of cases or on small differences between estimates.

Nonsampling Variability. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources, e.g., inability to obtain information about all cases in the sample, definitional difficulties, differences in the interpretation of questions, inability or unwillingness to provide correct information on the part of respondents, inability to recall information, errors made in collection such as in recording or coding the data, errors made in processing the data, errors made in estimating values for missing data, and failure to represent all units with the sample (undercoverage).

Undercoverage in the CPS results from missed housing units and missed persons within sample households. Overall undercoverage, as compared to the level of the decennial census, is about 5 percent. It is known that CPS undercoverage varies with age, sex, and race. Generally, undercoverage is larger for males than for females and larger for Blacks and other races than for Whites. Ratio estimation to independent age-sex-race population controls, as described previously, partially corrects for the bias due to survey undercoverage. However, biases exist in the estimates to the extent that missed persons in missed households or missed persons in interviewed households have different characteristics than interviewed persons in the same age-sex-race group. Further, the independent population controls used have not been adjusted for undercoverage in the 1970 census, which was estimated at 2.5 percent of the population, with similar undercoverage differentials by age, sex, and race as in CPS.

The approximate magnitude of the two sources of undercoverage of housing units is known. Of the 83,000,000 housing units in the U.S. about 600,000 new construction housing units other than mobile homes are not represented in the CPS sample because they were assigned building permits prior to January 1970, but building was not completed by the time of the census, (i.e., April 1970). Almost all conventional new construction, for which building permits were issued after 1969, is represented. About 290,000 occupied mobile homes are not represented in CPS; these units were either missed in the census or have been built or occupied since the census. These estimates of missed units are relevant to the present sample only and not to earlier designs where the extent of undercoverage was generally less. The extent of other sources of undercoverage of housing units is unknown but believed to be small.

Sampling Variability. The standard errors given in the following tables are primarily measures of sampling variability, that is, of the variations that occurred by chance because a sample rather than the entire population was surveyed. The chances are about 68 out of 100 that an estimate from the survey differs from a complete census figure by less than the standard error. The chances are about 90 out of 100 that this difference would be less than 1.6 times the standard error and about 95 out of 100 that the difference would be less than twice the standard error.

All the statements of comparison appearing in the text are significant at a 1.6 standard error level or better, and most are significant at a level of more than 2.0 standard errors. This means that for most differences cited in the text, the estimated difference is greater than twice the standard error of the difference. Statements of comparison qualified in some way (e.g., by use of the phrase, "some evidence") have a level of significance between 1.6 and 2.0 standard errors.

Comparability With Other Data. Caution should be used in comparing estimates from 1977, when the expanded sample was used, to those from 1976 and earlier years. Some relatively large differences in estimates of population in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas have been observed between the 461 and 614 area samples. These differences reflect a relatively large increase in variance on those estimates and do not represent actual changes in the population.

Note When Using Small Estimates. Summary measures (such as averages and percent distributions) are shown in the report only when the base of the measure is 75,000 or greater. Because of the large standard errors involved, there is little chance that summary measures would reveal useful information when computed on a smaller base. Estimated numbers are shown, however, even though the relative standard errors of these numbers are larger than those for corresponding percentages. These smaller estimates are provided primarily to permit such combinations of the categories as serve each user's need.

Standard Errors for Data Based on the Decennial Census. Sampling errors on all data from the 5-percent sample of the 1970 decennial census shown in this report are small enough to be disregarded. However, the standard errors may be found in the appropriate census volumes.

Standard Error Tables and Their Use. In order to derive standard errors that would be applicable to a large number of estimates and could be prepared at a moderate cost, a number of approximations were required. Therefore, instead of providing an individual standard error for each estimate, generalized sets of standard errors are provided for various types of characteristics. As a result, the sets of standard errors provided give an indication of the order of magnitude of the standard error of an estimate rather than the precise standard error.

The figures in tables A-1 and A-2 provide approximations to standard errors of estimated numbers and estimated percentages. Standard errors for intermediate values not shown in the generalized tables of standard errors may be approximated by linear interpolation. Estimated standard errors for specific characteristics cannot be obtained from tables A-1 or A-2 without the use of factors in table A-3. These factors must be applied to the generalized standard errors in order to adjust for the combined effect of sample design and estimating procedure on the value of the characteristic.

Two parameters (denoted "a" and "b") are used to calculate standard errors for each type of characteristics; they are presented in table A-4. These parameters were used to calculate the standard errors in tables A-1 and A-2 and to calculate the factors in table A-3. They also may be used to directly calculate the standard errors for estimated numbers and percentages. Methods for direct computation are given in the following sections.

Standard Errors of Estimated Numbers. The approximate standard error, σ_x, of an estimated number shown in this report can be obtained in two ways. It may be obtained by use of the formula

$$\sigma_x = f\sigma \qquad (1)$$

where f is the appropriate factor from table A-3, and σ is the standard error on the estimate obtained by interpolation from table A-1. Alternatively, standard errors may be approximated by formula (2) from which the standard errors were calculated in table A-1. Use of this formula will provide more accurate results than the use of formula (1) above.

$$\sigma_x = \sqrt{ax^2 + bx} \qquad (2)$$

Here x is the size of the estimate and a and b are the parameters in table A-4 associated with the particular type of characteristic.

Standard Errors of Estimated Percentages. The reliability of an estimated percentage, computed using sample data for both numerator and denominator, depends upon both the size of the percentage and the size of the total upon which the percentage is based. Estimated percentages are relatively more reliable than the corresponding estimates of the numerators of the percentages, particularly if the percentages are 50 percent or more. When the numerator and denominator of the percentage are in different categories, use the factor or parameters from table A-3 or A-4 indicated by the numerator. The approximate standard error, $\sigma_{(x,p)}$, of an estimated percentage can be obtained by use of the formula

$$\sigma_{(x,p)} = f\sigma \qquad (3)$$

In this formula f is the appropriate factor from table A-3, and σ is the standard error on the estimate from table A-2. Alternatively, standard errors may be approximated by formula (4), from which standard errors in table A-2 were calculated; direct computation will give more accurate results than use of the standard error tables and the factors.

$$\sigma_{(x,p)} = \sqrt{\frac{b}{x} \cdot p\,(100 - p)} \qquad (4)$$

Here x is the size of the subclass of persons or families which is the base of the percentage, p is the percentage ($0 \leq p \leq 100$), and b is the parameter in table A-4 associated with the particular type of characteristic in the numerator of the percentage.

Standard Error of a Difference. For a difference between two sample estimates, the standard error is approximately equal to

$$\sigma_{(x-y)} = \sqrt{\sigma_x^2 + \sigma_y^2} \qquad (5)$$

where σ_x and σ_y are the standard errors of the estimates x and y; the estimates can be of numbers, percents, ratios, etc. This will represent the actual standard errors quite accurately for the difference between two estimates of the same characteristic in two different areas, or for the difference between separate and uncorrelated characteristics in the same area. If, however, there is a high positive correlation between the two characteristics, the formula will overestimate the true standard error.

Standard Error of a Ratio. Certain mean values for persons in families shown in the tables of this report were calculated as the ratio of two numbers. For example, the mean number of persons per family is calculated as

$$\frac{x}{y} = \frac{\text{total number of persons in families}}{\text{total number of families}}$$

Standard errors for these means may be approximated as shown below. There are two cases to consider. In either case, the denominator y represents a count of families of a certain class, and the numerator x represents a count of persons with the characteristic under consideration who are members of these families.

Case 1: There is at least one person having the characteristic in every family of the class: as for example, the mean number of persons per family. For ratios of this kind, the standard error is approximated by the following formula:

$$\sigma_{\frac{x}{y}} = \sqrt{\left(\frac{x}{y}\right)^2 \left[\left(\frac{\sigma_y}{y}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{\sigma_x}{x}\right) - 2\rho \left(\frac{\sigma_x}{x}\right)\left(\frac{\sigma_y}{y}\right)\right]} \quad (6)$$

The standard error of the estimated number of families, σ_y, and the standard error of the estimated number of persons with the characteristics in those families, σ_x, may be calculated by the methods described above. In formula (6), ρ represents the correlation coefficient between the numerator and the denominator of the estimate. In the above examples, and for other ratios of this kind, use 0.7 as an estimate of ρ.

Case 2: The number of persons having the characteristic in a given family may be 0, 1, 2, 3, or more: for example, the mean number of persons under 18 years of age. For ratio of this kind the standard error is approximated by formula (6) but ρ is assumed to be zero. If ρ is actually positive, then this procedure will provide an overestimate of the standard error of the ratio.

Standard Error of a Median. The sampling variability of an estimated median depends upon the form of the distribution as well as the size of its base. An approximated method for measuring the reliability of a median is to determine an interval about the estimated median, such that there is a stated degree of confidence that the median based on a complete census lies within the interval. The following procedure may be used to estimate the 68-percent confidence limits of a median based on sample data.

1. Determine, using the standard error tables and factors or formula (4), the standard error of the estimate of 50 percent from the distribution.
2. Add to and subtract from 50 percent the standard error determined in step (1).
3. Using the distribution of the characteristic, calculate the confidence interval corresponding to the two points established in step (2).

A 95-percent confidence interval may be determined by finding the values corresponding to 50 percent plus and minus twice the standard error determined in step (1).

TABLE A-1.

Standard Errors of Estimated Numbers

(68 chances out of 100. Numbers in thousands)

Size of estimate	Standard error	Size of estimate	Standard error
25	10	5,000	144
50	15	10,000	201
100	21	15,000	243
250	33		
500	46	25,000	306
1,000	65	50,000	403
2,500	103	100,000	475

Note: For a particular characteristic, see table A-3 for the appropriate factor to apply to the above standard errors.

TABLE A-2.

Standard Errors of Estimated Percentages

(68 chances out of 100)

Base of estimated percentage (thousands)	Estimated percentage					
	1 or 99	2 or 98	5 or 95	10 or 90	25 or 75	50
75	2.4	3.3	5.2	7.1	10.3	11.9
100	2.0	2.9	4.5	6.2	8.9	10.3
250	1.3	1.8	2.8	3.9	5.6	6.5
500	0.9	1.3	2.0	2.8	4.0	4.6
1,000	0.6	0.9	1.4	2.0	2.8	3.3
2,500	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.2	1.8	2.1
5,000	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.2	1.5
10,000	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.0
15,000	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.8
25,000	0.13	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.7
50,000	0.09	0.13	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5
100,000	0.06	0.09	0.14	0.2	0.3	0.3

Note: For a particular characteristic, see table A-3 for the appropriate factor to apply to the above standard errors.

TABLE A-3.

Factors to be Applied to Generalized Standard Errors in Tables A-1 and A-2

(For meaning of symbols, see text)

Characteristics	CPS data collected January 1967 to present					
	Persons			Families		
	Total or White	Black	Spanish origin	Total or White	Black	Spanish origin
Total United States						
Family[1]	1.0	1.3	1.4	0.6	0.5	0.6
Residence: Regional or metropolitan and nonmetropolitan	1.0	1.3	1.4	0.7	0.8	0.8
Education, tenure, employment status, and occupation[1]	...	...	...	0.6	0.5	0.6

[1]For metropolitan-nonmetropolitan data cross-tabulated with this characteristic, multiply the factor of interest in this row by 1.4.

TABLE A-4.

"a" and "b" Parameters for Estimated Numbers and Percentages of Persons or Families

(For meaning of symbols, see text)

Characteristic	Persons		Families	
	a	b	a	b
TOTAL POPULATION[1]				
Family				
Total or White	...	...	-0.000010	1,389
Black and other races	...	...	-0.000087	1,255
Spanish origin	...	...	-0.000020	1,422
Residence: Regional or metropolitan-nonmetropolitan				
Total or White	-0.000020	4,253	-0.000016	2,170
Black and other races	-0.000308	7,402	-0.000178	2,561
Spanish origin	-0.000044	8,917	-0.000039	2,844
Education, tenure, employment status, and occupation[1]				
Total or White	...	...	-0.000010	1,389
Black and other races	...	...	-0.000087	1,255
Spanish origin	...	...	-0.000020	1,422

[1]For metropolitan-nonmetropolitan data cross-tabulated with another characteristic, multiply that characteristic's parameters by 2.0.

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